

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Central Committee

Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Meeting

Johannesburg, South Africa

20–28 January 1994





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**Central Committee
of the World Council of Churches**

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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
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FOREWORD

The forty-fifth meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches was held at the Eskom Centre near Johannesburg, South Africa, 20-28 January 1994, at the invitation of the South African Council of Churches and the WCC's member churches in South Africa.

The Opening Worship at the Central Methodist Mission Church in Johannesburg was planned by representatives of the South African Council of Churches and led by the minister, Rev. Mvume Dandala. Members of local churches from Johannesburg, Soweto and Alexandra, as well as some Central Committee members participated. The sermon was preached by the Rt Rev. M. Stanley Mogoba. Singing was led by the Imilonji Kantu Choir from Soweto, and the organist was Mr Paul Norman.

Daily morning worship was planned by a group of staff under the leadership of Rev. Terry MacArthur. On three mornings, part of the worship period was spent in Bible Study, led by Rev. Zodwa Memela, Bishop Ayres Mattos, and Mr Malusi Mpumlwana.

The young people who acted as stewards during the meeting were invited to introduce themselves during a session on the opening day. The Moderator and members of Central Committee expressed thanks to them for their commitment demonstrated in their willingness to travel to South Africa to help with the manifold tasks involved in running such a meeting. Although some had the advantage of being present during plenary sessions, many others were working behind the scenes and had little opportunity to follow the proceedings.

Representatives of NCCs and REOs met on 19 January, as did WCC members of the Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church. In the course of the week, two sessions were spent in Regional Meetings.

On Saturday afternoon 22 January, groups of participants were offered an opportunity to visit townships in the area around Johannesburg; on Sunday morning, 23 January arrangements were made for visits to local churches in the Johannesburg, Soweto and Pretoria areas, when many participants were invited to preach or to bring messages and greetings.

Among several occasions for celebration were the South African cultural evening on Saturday 22 January which included dramatic and musical entertainment by local groups, while on Tuesday 25 January the 50th anniversary of WCC's Unit IV - Sharing and Service (former Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service) and the 25th anniversary of the Programme to Combat Racism were appropriately observed in dance and song.

*

Archbishop Aram Keshishian shared the chairing of business sessions with Pastor Nélida Ritchie and Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan. Deliberative sessions were chaired by one of the Presidents or a member of the Central Committee.

OPENING ACTIONS

I. Opening Worship

The Opening Worship took place in the Central Methodist Church, Johannesburg, on the evening of Thursday 20 January; the Rt Rev. M. Stanley Mogoba preached the sermon. Expressing appreciation for the World Council's stance against racism in the years since the formation of the Programme to Combat Racism in 1969, he urged the Council to take up his call for a programme to combat war. He described South Africans as *"a singing people. We have not sung because we were happy. We have sung even when we cried. We have sung so as not to allow ourselves to be broken. We have sung to survive"*.

II. Call to Order

The forty-fifth meeting of the Central Committee was called to order by the Moderator, Archbishop Aram Keshishian, at 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 20 January 1994. He greeted participants in a spirit of Christian love and fellowship, noting that this was the first time the WCC Central Committee had met in South Africa. Our presence was an expression of the firm position held by the WCC during recent decades in its support of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) on the issues of apartheid and sanctions. While recognising that suffering was still going on, it was evident that the country was moving from a period characterised by resistance and sanctions to one of reconstruction and democratisation.

The transition would not be easy. Meeting in South Africa at this decisive moment in the country's history, the WCC was committing itself to the support of the churches in South Africa and to the SACC in their efforts to achieve justice and peace, national reconciliation and democratisation. The Moderator expressed his belief that the following perspectives should guide the Council in this new period of emerging hopes and challenges:

1. So far, the WCC had played an advocacy role for a "code of sanctions". It should now move to advocacy for just investments that enhance the democratisation process and thus the rights of people for full participation.
2. By participating in the monitoring of elections through the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa (EMPSA) the WCC was contributing to enabling people to understand and practise their fundamental democratic and political rights. The fact that the majority of the people of South Africa would be voting for the first time was giving rise to much uncertainty and fear, and to overcome these the people must be helped to understand the voting procedures and to be assured that the process is democratic and confidential.
3. The culture of violence must be replaced by one of tolerance and mutual understanding and trust. How can the Christian message of reconciliation

become the basis of this new culture? How can the people of South Africa express their unity in diversity, their belonging to one nation, to one history, to one future? This is a challenge that must be faced seriously and with courage.

The precondition for these processes was the acceptance of repentance and forgiveness by all: government officials, churches, movements, the people. How can the church become a living and dynamic reality in the life of the people of South Africa? How can the churches play their prophetic, renewing and reconciling role? This is the call of God which is stronger today than ever before.

The Moderator went on to welcome Dr Konrad Raiser who would participate for the first time as General Secretary in a meeting of Central Committee. He affirmed that the Officers and Executive Committee had already established a good working relationship with the General Secretary and looked forward to a new period of critical but creative reflection and committed action in the life of the WCC.

III. Roll Call and Seating of Substitutes

The General Secretary called the roll of Presidents, Officers and members of Central Committee (Appendix I), and presented apologies for absence from members who were unable to send substitutes: Prof. Anna-Marie Aagaard, Mr Charles Ajalat, Ms Nancy Basmajian, Metr. Chrysostomos of Peristerion, Most Rev. John Ghose, Bishop John Mungania, Rev. Violet Sampa-Bredt, Rev. Sela Taufatofua-Manu, Rev. Nove Valiaau, Rev. Dr Janos Viczian.

The seating of substitutes was agreed as follows (see also Appendix I):

- Archimandrite Feofan Ashurkov for Dr Alexei Buevsky,
- Mr Raymond Bitemo for Mr Michel Moukouyou-Kimbouala,
- Rev. Keith Clements for Mr John Briggs, (26-28 January)
- Rev. Douglas Fromm for Dr Edwin Mulder,
- Rev. David Gill for Rev. Ian Allsop,
- Rev. Canon George Lasebikan for Very Rev. Joseph Omoyajowo,
- Ato Gebrekristos Makonnen for Dr Markos Wolde Eyesus,
- Rev. Caroline Pattiasina for Dr Hesina Tetelepta,
- Mr Petar Pejovic for Metr. Jovan Pavlovic,
- Rt Rev. Jeffery Rowthorn for the Most Rev. Edmond Browning,
- Dr Heinz Rüegger for Rev. Heinrich Rusterholz,
- Rev. Klaus Wilkens for OKR Dr Walter Arnold,
- Ms Mary Um for Prof. Park Jong-Wha.

The General Secretary then called the names of Delegated Representatives and Delegated Observers, inviting them, together with the Advisers and Observers, to stand and be recognised.

A number of **Guests** including several South African church leaders and SACC representatives were also welcomed:

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican)
- Archbishop Peter Buthelezi, representative of the President of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference
- Archbishop Markos Antonius, Coptic Orthodox Church
- Rev. Sam Arends, General Secretary, United Congregational Church of South Africa
- Bishop Duncan Buchanan, Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg
- Rev. Dr Donald Cragg, Methodist Church of South Africa
- Rev. Thomas Mbuli, General Secretary, Evangelical Lutheran Church, South Africa
- Rt Rev. Doug Muller, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of South Africa
- Mr A. Wentzel, Chairman, United Congregational Church of South Africa
- Ms Brigalia Bam, interim General Secretary, SACC
- Rev. Frank Chikane, SACC, Member of Independent Electoral Commission
- Rev. Dr K.E.M. Mgojo, President, SACC
- Dr Beyers Naudé, Honorary Life President, SACC
- Bishop Peter Storey, Honorary Life President, SACC.

IV. New Members of Central Committee

Dr Nababan reported that the Executive Committee recommended the appointment of a number of new members to the Central Committee to replace persons who had died or who had resigned. The following new members were **accepted** and invited to take their seats forthwith:

- **His Eminence Abraham**, Bishop of Nikortsmida, Georgian Orthodox Church, replacing Metropolitan David who died in October 1992 (not present);
- **Landesbischof Prof. Dr Klaus Engelhardt**, Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), replacing Bishop Dr Hans-Gernot Jung who died in November 1991;
- **Rev. Wali Fejo**, Uniting Church of Australia, replacing Rev. Djiniyini Gondarra;
- **Rt Rev. John Neill**, Church of Ireland, replacing Rt Rev. Brian Hannon;
- **Rt Rev. Jonas Jonson**, Church of Sweden, replacing Archbishop Bertil Werkström;
- **Rev. Nove Valiaau**, Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, replacing Rev. Laau Tanielu (not present).

At a closed session, Dr Nababan reported that Rev. Mrs Sela Taufatofua-Manu of the Methodist Church in Tonga had communicated her intention to resign her membership in Central Committee as she was now living in the USA. In agreement with the Methodist Church in Tonga, the Executive Committee recommended that **Rev. Valamotu Palu** (present as a Youth Adviser) be appointed to take Mrs Taufatofua's place on Central Committee. This was **agreed**.

V. Welcome

After expressing gratitude and joy on behalf of Central Committee members to the South African Council of Churches and to representatives of the churches in South Africa for their invitation to meet in their country at this historic moment, the Moderator invited Ms Brigalia Bam, as interim General Secretary of the SACC, to address participants.

Ms Bam thanked the Central Committee for accepting the invitation to meet in South Africa. In welcoming all those present, Ms Bam spoke appreciatively of the support the people and churches of South Africa had received from the WCC and the ecumenical movement during the apartheid regime. Since 1968, South Africa and the issue of apartheid had featured on every Central Committee agenda, but despite the controversy that always surrounded the Programme to Combat Racism, the WCC member churches had never stopped supporting their sisters and brothers in South Africa in their struggle for change.

Present developments in South Africa were bringing new challenges, and this transitional period was both a time of pain and of hope. In the wake of apartheid there was poverty, homelessness and a high level of unemployment, and the churches are faced with the challenge of seeking ways to achieve reconciliation. Ms Bam asked for the continued support and assistance of Central Committee members in helping them to find a common vision and to move into specific programmes that can be accomplished together. She urged Central Committee to continue their solidarity, especially with the women of South Africa.

VI. In Memoriam

The Moderator drew attention to the passing away of several persons who had been close to the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical community:

- Mr E. Ngulama, Presbyterian Church of Sudan
- Bishop Oliver Tomkins, former moderator of the Faith and Order Commission
- Metr. David of Sukhumi (Georgian Orthodox Church), a member of this Central Committee
- Dr Edwin Espy, a former general secretary of the NCCCUSA
- Ambassador Olle Dahlén, former moderator of CCIA, co-founder of the Life and Peace Institute in Uppsala
- Rev. M.A. Thomas, ecumenical human rights activist in India
- Bishop Patelisio Finau, Roman Catholic Church, chairperson of the Pacific Conference of Churches
- Rev. Dr Arie Brouwer, former WCC deputy general secretary, and former NCCCUSA general secretary
- Dr Howard M. Mills, general secretary, United Church of Canada
- Mr Hector Caselli, former general secretary, World YMCA
- Dr Karl Hertz, former director, Ecumenical Institute Bossey.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of these friends and colleagues; prayers were said for Dr Adriaan Geense, former director of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, dying of cancer (he died on 30 January).

VII. Agenda and Timetable

The Moderator called on the General Secretary to present the revised schedule of this meeting. Dr Raiser indicated a number of items that would require particular attention by the Central Committee. The revised agenda and timetable were **approved** as circulated.

VIII Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the forty-fourth meeting of the Central Committee held in Geneva on 21-28 August 1992 had been circulated. No corrections having been received, Dr Eugene Turner moved that they be approved with commendation. The Central Committee **agreed**.

IX. Appointment of Committees

A. *Staffing and Nominations Committee*

The General Secretary proposed that, as was customary, the Executive Committee serve as the Staffing and Nominations Committee of the Central Committee. This was **agreed**.

B. *Unit Committees*

The General Secretary reminded Central Committee that substitutes normally replace those members for whom they are substituting (Appendix II). Advisers, observers and delegated representatives had been assigned to Committees, and efforts had been made to achieve a balanced distribution. Any requests for changes should be addressed to the Assistant to the General Secretary.

C. *Finance Committee*

Dr Nababan, Moderator of the Staffing and Nominations Committee, reminded Central Committee that membership of the Finance Committee remained the same as before, since it is a standing committee (Appendix II).

D. *Public Issues Committee (PIC)*

The General Secretary referred to the proposed list of members, noting the importance of maintaining some continuity as well as including some who had not been involved previously. In view of the major concentration on Africa, more than half the members proposed were from the African continent. After discussion, the Central Committee **approved** the membership (Appendix II).

X. Public Issues

The General Secretary referred to the procedures for public issues, and noted that the Executive Committee was proposing that the main focus be on Africa with special attention to South Africa. CCIA staff, in consultation with other colleagues concerned, and building on advice received from a consultation in Windhoek in December 1993 when a number of African church leaders had been present, had prepared a background note on Africa; the Executive felt this should be commended to the churches for study and appropriate action. Guidelines for a statement on South Africa had also been approved by the Executive, to be finalised by the Public Issues Committee.

Secondly, the Executive had given provisional approval to a draft statement on global warming and climate change resulting from a Unit III consultation, being a step forward in the follow-up to the covenant on global warming adopted at the Seoul Convocation on JPIC in 1990. In addition, a list of actions taken in the area of public issues since August 1992 had been circulated to Central Committee members for information.

Opportunity would be provided for members to comment and exchange views on public issues related matters at a later session. Additional proposals for consideration by the PIC should be handed in within a period of 24 hours.

XI. Stewards

At the beginning of the afternoon business session, the Stewards were invited to introduce themselves. The Moderator assured them they were not present simply to serve members of Central Committee but must see themselves as part of the global ecumenical community. He pointed out that we are all stewards in the profound sense of the word, and it was with this understanding of common stewardship that he wanted to welcome them, urging them to engage themselves consciously in the ecumenical witness of their churches.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATION

1. Applications for Membership

Dr Nababan reported that the Executive Committee had considered a number of applications for membership and recommended that the following three churches be accepted into full membership of the World Council of Churches:

- Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania
- Eglise Episcopale de Burundi/Church of the Province of Burundi (Anglican)
- Eglise Episcopale de Rwanda/Church of the Province of Rwanda (Anglican)

The first two churches had already been members of the WCC through the Church of the Province of Burundi, Rwanda and Boga-Zaire, which had recently been divided into three autonomous churches.

The Central Committee agreed to receive these three churches into full membership in the World Council of Churches.

His Holiness Anastasios, Archbishop of Tirana and All Albania, was invited to address the Central Committee. He explained that the Orthodox Church of Albania had been involved in the ecumenical movement in its early days, particularly in Faith and Order work, but due to the subsequent isolation of Albania from the rest of the world, it had not been possible for the Church to join the World Council; in other circumstances she would surely have been a founder member. It was therefore all the more an occasion for joy and celebration that his Church could at last join the fellowship of the World Council.

The Archbishop went on to describe the unique situation that his Church had experienced, in that for decades she was totally destroyed. In November 1967 the Albanian Communist Congress declared the country to be the first atheistic state in the world: its constitution denied the human right of religious freedom. During the persecution there was great suffering and many of the faithful - both lay and clergy - died. All ecclesiastical property was confiscated and demolished or converted for a variety of secular uses.

As the persecution drew to an end, the Church of Albania began to re-establish herself from the ruins through an initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Church remains one of the poorest in the world, but she has experienced a true resurrection. Now she is developing in a situation of religious plurality, with Orthodox and Roman Catholics as the main communities, but a revival of Islam is also taking place. Many people remain atheist or avoid belonging to a religious group while others are still searching. Some extreme protestant evangelical groups are also working in the country, so the next few years will be critical for the religious orientation of the Albanian people. The Church is seeking harmonious collaboration among the various elements, sharing in efforts towards the construction of a just and free society.

Archbishop Augustin Nshamihigo of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda expressed appreciation at the decision of Central Committee to accept his church as a full member of the WCC. Since his Church's inauguration as an independent entity in June 1992, efforts to promote the ecumenical movement among the churches in Rwanda continued at local, national and regional levels. He reiterated their request for both spiritual and practical support at this time when there is such a need for reconciliation in a spirit of peace so that reconstruction can be accomplished. The visit of the WCC General Secretary together with AACC General Secretary, Rev. José Chipenda, in December 1993 had been appreciated and seen as an encouragement.

2. Applications for Affiliation

Secondly, Dr Nababan reported that the Executive Committee recommended acceptance of four councils of churches as associate councils of the WCC:

- Churches Together in England (CTE)
- Council of Churches in Madagascar (FFKM)
- Christian Council of Sweden - Sveriges Kristen Rad
- Uganda Joint Christian Council

The Central Committee agreed.

During morning worship the following day, representatives of the new member churches and councils took part in a special liturgy to mark their reception into the fellowship of the World Council of Churches.

REPORTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND THE MODERATOR

I. Report of the General Secretary¹

After welcoming members of Central Committee, Dr Raiser thanked them for their confidence in electing him General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. He had been encouraged by their support during his first year in office and looked forward to establishing closer relationships with them, as was already the case with the Officers and members of the Executive Committee.

Dr Raiser went on to refer to the period of intensive work that had characterised the time since the last meeting of Central Committee in August 1992. Following the restructuring, attention had shifted towards the implementing of programmes, while commissions, advisory and working groups had met to sharpen programmatic foci and initiate new activities.

Reviewing activities during the past eighteen months, Dr Raiser affirmed that the Executive Committee had appointed the Executive Directors of the four Programme Units. With their arrival and the appointment of several other senior staff persons, the core leadership of the Council had been strengthened, providing a new sense of purpose and coherence for its work.

On the administrative side, a new accounting system was being introduced combined with a new approach to the electronic processing of information necessary for the management of the WCC as well as for the sharing of

¹ The full text appears in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 46, no.2, 1994.

resources, with the aim of providing a tool for exchange of information with member churches, councils and other partners in a more accessible form. Guidelines were being drawn up to ensure that the WCC makes appropriate use of new communication technologies.

With regard to general policy concerns, the reorganisation process had left several matters requiring follow-up, including the reflection about the *Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC*, initiated by the previous Central Committee, to be seen as a central concern in the period up to the Eighth Assembly. Member churches and ecumenical partners had been invited to participate in this process, while ecumenical meetings and team visits offer opportunity for hearings to obtain echoes about the expectations held by the member churches. An interim report would be presented to Central Committee in 1995.

A second item requiring follow up concerned the revision of the by-laws and regulations for the work of commissions, advisory and working groups; this would come to the attention of Central Committee during this present meeting. Thirdly, following the many questions arising after the Canberra Assembly, Central Committee had called for further consideration of the nature and style of an assembly. The Executive had given careful attention to this and would report at a later session.

The Context

Dr Raiser reminded members of Central Committee that this was the first time a WCC governing body had met in South Africa, and only twice before had it met in Africa (with the exception of the Nairobi Assembly in 1975) - namely, in Enugu, Nigeria in 1965 and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1971. The decision to accept the invitation from the South African member churches had been an act of faith, since at that point the outcome of the multi-party negotiating forum was by no means certain.

Situating the meeting in the context of South Africa, and within the African continent as a whole, Dr Raiser gave an overview of developments since the Cottesloe consultation of 1960². Regarding the South African Council of Churches' call for a lifting of economic sanctions, he noted that many churches and ecumenical bodies had responded. This meeting offered opportunity to review and reformulate WCC policy regarding South Africa. The SACC had adopted a Code of Conduct for business in the country which is being promoted as an expression of the churches' mission for social justice, and a concern for establishing socio-political stability. It is also an expression of the conviction that a path of sustainable growth must be found for South African economic development as part of the need to redress apartheid's economic injustices.

² An account of this chapter of ecumenical history and the WCC's involvement in South Africa is published under the title *A Long Struggle*, edited by Dr Pauline Webb.

The most immediate challenge was the organisation of the elections for a new South African parliament - the first non-racist, democratic elections in the country's history. The churches were actively involved in promoting voter registration and education, while the WCC was engaged together with the SACC and the SACBC in the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme for South Africa (EMPSA). The churches should be encouraged to take seriously the concept of "monitoring" as an expression of the Christian ministry for social justice, peace and reconciliation, so urgently needed in South Africa.

The churches have a continuing agenda as part of the civil society. The need for new political leadership in the future South Africa was great, and leaders in the Christian community figure among those being solicited for public office. The churches and ecumenical bodies need encouragement to maintain their independent voice on behalf of the people and in favour of social justice and basic rights. Undoubtedly the WCC would continue to give priority attention to South Africa in its programmes.

Indeed, the WCC had given considerable attention to Africa in recent years through various programmes, consultations, visits and ecumenical peace-making efforts, in close cooperation with the AACC. Signs of hope were seen in places where an ending of dictatorial rule had given way to democratic elections. Yet with recent increases in ethnic and civil tensions, there seems to be no end to the suffering of millions of refugees and internally displaced people. The attempt to introduce democracy through elections has failed in many countries in Africa, showing that the search for new forms of democratic legitimacy and good government cannot be separated from the struggle for basic social and economic justice. Traditional forms of community organisation through mutual solidarity and consensus-building have been eroded through the introduction of competitive systems seeking power and wealth.

Studies on the probable effects of the recently concluded Uruguay Round of negotiations on world trade show that, while industrialised countries will make considerable gains and developing countries on the whole will increase their trade benefits, sub-Saharan Africa will be the main loser due to reduced market access and lower trade volumes.

Referring to the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference which gave rise to the formation of the World Bank, the IMF as well as GATT, Dr Raiser said that in spite of a period of unprecedented growth among the industrialised countries of the North, these institutions have not been able to resolve or prevent major crises such as the growing gap between rich and poor or the debt crisis. Importance must be attached to initiatives that will strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation in Africa, as well as efforts to improve local social and economic structures. The WCC is calling for a reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions, for it is time to seek forms of global governance and economic organisation which reflect the new world situation after the end of the cold war.

What does this mean for the future ecumenical responsibility in and for Africa? The main challenge is directed to Africa - its people and its churches. The AACC with the churches and councils has initiated a number of processes aimed at spelling out the theological, ethical and socio-political dimensions of a perspective of "reconstruction" for Africa. This deserves the fullest possible support by ecumenical partners elsewhere.

Yet the ever increasing crises developing in different parts of Africa, requiring immediate response, leave little energy for long-term processes. That was why the Executive Committee adopted a "Minute on Africa" (March 1993) calling for the establishment of an instrumentality to "encourage, accompany and support the churches and the ecumenical movement in Africa more vigorously". Hopefully this meeting of Central Committee in Africa would provide a chance to finalise agreements aiming at a council-wide response to African concerns in cooperation with AACC and African member churches and networks.

An Emerging Profile

The fact that only three years remained for the Council's "normal" activities after which all efforts would have to be invested in assembly preparations must be seen as a challenge to achieve a greater degree of concentration and coherence. The General Secretary used the rest of his report as an attempt to discover the emerging profile of the Council's programmatic activities. He based his reflection on the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (which was being celebrated in most regions during the week in which Central Committee was meeting): *The Household of God: Called to be "One in Heart and Mind"*. The image of the *household* was helpful in articulating this profile since it could be related to the two concepts *life* and *community* which appear in all the Council's programmatic outlines.

He went on to show how the profiles of the four programme units relate to this framework of interpretation, outlining the main emphases in the work of each unit. Clearly these profiles had been developed independently from each other, and do not lend themselves easily to this search for commonalities. The biblical image of the *household of God* could serve as a catalyst here, for, like the Jubilee motif, it offers a fresh perspective on a cluster of concerns that have been central to the understanding of our ecumenical calling in recent years.

The struggle is no longer defined in terms of confrontation; the challenge and the ecumenical calling today is to assist and participate in the conscious reconstruction of life in community - both in the Christian community and in the human community at large. We are at a point where we recognise the limitations of heavy organisational structures, where ecological insights require a radical review of the management of global economic and financial systems, and where we see an erosion of the moral fabric in many parts of the world. The strengthening and conscious rebuilding of community structures and their reintegration into the given ecological *space* have thus become a priority. We are approaching

a decisive turning point in our moral, social and spiritual consciousness, and there is an expectation that the churches and the ecumenical movement might provide leadership in this profound reorientation.

The challenge before us is whether we can sufficiently synchronise the clarification of the programmatic profile of the WCC, the deliberations about the thematic focus of the Eighth Assembly, and the processes regarding a common understanding of the WCC and of its role in cooperation with ecumenical partners in the one ecumenical movement, so that we can arrive at a fresh and revitalised articulation of the ecumenical vision for our time. With the guidance of God's Spirit, may we be enabled to live up to this challenge.

II. Report of the Moderator³

Rev. Nélide Ritchie, presiding, invited the Moderator to address participants. The Moderator explained his intention to highlight significant features of the work of the Executive Committee in the period since Central Committee met in August 1992, and secondly, to take up the theme "Towards an ecumenical ethic for a responsible society in a sustainable creation". He had chosen this subject, believing that a critical assessment of ecological crises and economic injustice in an ethical perspective must receive focal attention on the agenda of the ecumenical movement and the WCC in the coming years.

The Executive Committee had met in March and in September 1993, and again prior to this session of Central Committee. Details of their work and of the actions taken can be found in the Minutes, which are circulated to members of Central Committee. The Moderator indicated briefly some of the main aspects:

At the request of Central Committee, the Executive had given considerable time to preparing recommendations for Central Committee action regarding the **Eighth Assembly**. Secondly, relations and collaboration with the **Roman Catholic Church** remain a vital dimension of the life and work of the WCC, and the Executive had proposed a number of actions designed to give fresh impetus to the WCC-RCC relationship. The Officers had for the first time held a working meeting with leaders and staff of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; this significant meeting took place in November 1993.

Both the RCC and WCC have reaffirmed their partnership in the one ecumenical movement, while acknowledging their different ecumenical perceptions, priorities and working styles; the necessity of deepening their relationship and enlarging the scope of collaboration was stressed; particular attention should be given to local ecumenism, while joint initiatives at global level should be taken

³ The full text can be found in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol.46, no.2, 1994.

wherever possible; issues where the two bodies have differing opinions or approaches must be dealt with in appropriate ways according to each case.

The Moderator also reported on the process **Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC**. A study guide had been sent to member churches, NCCs, REOs and Christian World Communions, and responses were expected in the course of 1994. A first draft would come to Central Committee in 1995.

In connection with the **Ecumenical Decade - Churches in Solidarity with Women**, the Mid-Decade Reflection Process included ecumenical team visits to each of the member churches during 1993 and 1994; several of these have taken place and others were planned. Many different means have been mobilised to assess with the churches the impact of the Decade on their life and witness.

The WCC's financial situation had maintained a degree of stability following the difficult period encountered since September 1990. Details can be found in the report of the Finance Committee elsewhere in these minutes.

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Coming to the second section of his report, the Moderator underlined the fact that humanity had entered a crucial period of its history. Hopes and prospects for a new tomorrow brought about by significant changes in many spheres of life were being overshadowed by new tensions and fears of a total destruction of life. Unprecedented economic and industrial progress with unlimited use of earth's limited resources had increased poverty, created food scarcity and jeopardised the eco-life support system. The Earth Summit (UNCED) had called the nations to search for a "sustainable future".

Such a goal could be attained only through a responsible society in a sustainable creation. The central issue was the self-understanding of humanity and its vocation vis-à-vis God and His creation. The role of the churches was no longer only to resist and combat, but also to discern visions and identify values that would ensure economic justice, political participation and a sustainable creation. The ecumenical movement should treat ecological and economic issues in their inter-relatedness and as pertaining to the Christian faith, working for ecumenical ethical paradigms that would help the churches provide orientation to societies searching for new meaning and identity.

Towards New Eco-Theological Paradigms

The ecological crisis is not just environmental pollution; it is a crisis of the whole life system. The problem is essentially a theological-ethical one related to humanity's role in the creation. We must develop a new theology of creation that challenges the prevailing paradigms of humanity-creation relations. Such a theology necessarily implies a shift from anthropocentrism to theocentrism, from domination to accountability, from self-centredness to a holistic spirituality.

1. *From anthropocentric to theocentric theo-ecology*

Some of the significant aspects and important dimensions of creation which are basic for any Christian-biblical understanding of creation are:

- a) Creation is God's gift of life;
- b) The Bible affirms the goodness of creation and the intrinsic value of all beings;
- c) God's creation is characterised by relationship, order and unity;
- d) Creation has to be seen in the perspective of the Kingdom of God, since it is the beginning of God's economy and covenant with humanity;
- e) In Jesus Christ God has reconciled the creation to Himself.

It is time now to re-emphasise the trinitarian understanding, eschatological perspective and holistic nature of creation.

2. *From domination to accountability*

It is important to highlight some of the significant features of the special relationship between humanity and creation. Christian theology must rediscover the specific role of the human being in relationship with creation, as deacon of creation, as mediator between creation and God, and as co-worker with God; secondly, the church must call humanity to conversion from dominion to responsible relationship, and from self-sufficiency and self-glorification to total accountability to God.

3. *From self-centred to a holistic spirituality*

Christian spirituality by its very nature is Trinitarian, holistic, and eco-centred. Western Christianity has virtually lost these vital dimensions of spirituality and has confined it to the person-God relationship. This is one of the causes of the present ecological crisis. We must therefore rediscover the sacramental character and spiritual dimension of creation that challenges the "utilitarian" view of it. We must re-emphasise the healing, liberating and transforming role of Christian spirituality which aims at establishing a right relationship with creation. The pneumatological perspective on creation that so forcefully emerged in Canberra should constantly remind us of the importance of a holistic and a deeper eco-spirituality.

Societies in search of re-orientation

Humanity as well is in a process of disintegration. The present structures, norms and policies that govern societies are simply exploiting the people by enriching the rich, impoverishing the poor and destroying the creation. Hence the emergence of new models of society is a must. Communism has failed but capitalism with its exploitative nature cannot become the norm. It is beyond the immediate responsibility of the churches to propose new alternatives, but they have a major task in helping societies to set just and accountable structures, to ensure more participation in political and economic life, and to establish sustainable moral values. The churches should develop an ecumenical social ethic that outlines the Christian vision of society and engages them in a common struggle for restructuring and re-orienting societies.

In the ecumenical movement the concepts of a *responsible, just, participatory* and *sustainable* society have been developed. But living in different situations and being contextually conditioned, we have not been able to reach common and comprehensive ethical guidelines. Some perspectives may be of help in seeking a common ecumenical ethical understanding of the burning issues of our time:

1. *From quantitative growth to qualitative development*

- a) It is important to make a clear distinction between mere economic growth and "sustainable" development. There has to be a shift from growth-oriented development to "qualitative" development that fully respects ecological laws and concerns, as well as ethical values.
- b) "Sustainable" development must necessarily ensure the eradication of poverty, which is one of the concrete repercussions of unlimited economic growth and increasing ecological deterioration.
- c) Just and equitable distribution of wealth is a key factor for putting a limit to material growth and stopping the growing poverty.

Therefore, limiting economic growth and enhancing "sustainable" development are both moral and ecological necessities. The rich countries have the primary responsibility of re-evaluation and re-orienting their policy of development.

2. *From elite-controlled economy to participatory economy*

Economic structures and policies should be based on people's participation and empowerment, and not on their exploitation as consumers and factors of production. A Christian ethic stands firm for a participatory democracy that protects human dignity, value and the people's right to full justice, freedom and life. The churches should therefore commit themselves to re-shaping and re-orienting the present free-market system in a way that transcends the deficiencies and failure of both Marxist collectivism and liberal capitalism, and practises fully the economic democracy based on participation, shared responsibility, equality and mutual accountability.

3. *From life-destructive consumerism to a pattern of responsible living*

The present level of consumerism is such that the resources of the earth can no longer meet human needs. The church must deal with it as an ethical issue:

- by condemning the accumulation of wealth; by encouraging the reduction of consumption and waste, and sharing the resources of the earth,
- by promoting a culture that can build up the quality of life and live in harmony with creation's integrity,
- by aiming at breaking down the prejudices of race, class and gender to re-build an all-inclusive community of sharing and participation,

Christians should become examples of a new way of asceticism by consuming less and living responsibly.

Ecumenical Implications: A few considerations

Christian faith must be lived out in the midst of the ambiguities of a complex world and be enacted in concrete ethical decisions and commitments. These

priorities should acquire in the coming years more focal attention on the ecumenical agenda:

- The JPIC process must continue to remain at the heart of the work and witness of the WCC, and it is important that the debate on "Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society" (1976-79) be revived in new perspectives within JPIC.
- The role of the ecumenical movement is not only one of reminding, serving and challenging the churches, but also developing ecumenical social thinking which will help the churches in their efforts to seek the most appropriate ethical responses to the burning questions facing humanity.
- The development of a life-centred and eco-oriented theology of creation has to be a major thematic priority for the WCC for the coming period.
- The WCC should bring a specific contribution to the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development (1994, Cairo), and embark on a study process, tackling the issue of population in all its dimensions, manifestations and implications.
- A renewed Christian anthropology is crucial for the future of the ecumenical movement. What is vitally needed is a renewed understanding of the place and vocation of the human being in the creation.
- Commitment to a culture of non-violence, dialogue and solidarity has become a major concern for the pluralistic societies of today. The WCC could treat this concern through many of its major programmatic priorities.
- The debate on civil society that has emerged in the WCC is a helpful one particularly for the JPIC process. It still needs more clarity and focusing, as well as a clear ecclesiological basis, since churches are part of civil society.

Concluding, the Moderator said that the ecumenical movement is called to give to Christendom and the whole world "a vision in which the promise of life is stronger than the accusation of death ... critical hope that does not bow to the powers of destruction but is turned towards the future of life"⁴. This is a challenge with which the ecumenical movement must seriously grapple.

III. Discussion of both Reports

All speakers expressed appreciation of both the General Secretary's and the Moderator's reports. The main points raised were the following:

Bishop Gomez was concerned that no mention had been made thus far of the plight of the people of Haiti, and he feared that the new world order was inclined to forget small countries which feature less in the media than others. Dr Raiser responded that the issue would be taken up in the framework of international affairs concerns, and assured him that the situation in Haiti was indeed an ongoing matter of concern for the WCC.

⁴ W. Huber, "Perspectives for Ecumenism in the Nineties" in *The Ecumenical Movement Tomorrow: Suggestions for Approaches and Alternatives*, eds M.Reuver, F.Solms and G.Huizer, WCC-Kok Publ.House, Geneva, 1993, p.378.

In Dr Tveter's view, the churches were the main instrument through whom the Council works and they should thus occupy a different position from other partners with whom the WCC relates. In some places cooperation with other groups was easier than in others but the churches remain the primary partners. Responding, Dr Raiser said he had difficulty with this distinction between the churches and other ecumenical partners. The agencies and groups of committed Christians within our churches belong to the present reality of our churches and this is the basis on which we must build a new sense of ecumenical vocation.

Secondly, Dr Tveter recalled her intervention at the previous meeting regarding the question of reporting the work of the Executive to the Central Committee. She was grateful that the Moderator had reported in some detail but she still felt there was a missing link and wondered if there were any way by which Central Committee could respond to or express opinions about decisions made by the Executive. The Moderator regretted that in spite of every effort to keep Central Committee informed, Dr Tveter still felt there was something lacking. He asked what else could be done to help her feel more aware of the Executive's work?

Bishop Serapion stressed the importance of ensuring the presence of a strong Christian voice at the UN Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo later in 1994; he asked for information about the WCC's involvement and about efforts to alert the churches to its significance. Secondly, he urged that the whole problem of drug addiction be taken up by the WCC in relation to its work on the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Dr Raiser assured him both concerns were being acted upon, the first in Unit III, the second in Unit II.

Dr Page was glad to see questions of ecology and social justice being brought together and made central to the horizon of the churches. She had worked in the field of eco-theology but had not so far been able to use WCC material because of its dependence on the Genesis 1 account of Creation, for which scientists have no comprehension. It is not obvious to scientists and ecologists that the Creation had an original goodness and integrity, nor do they understand what it means to say "God is continuously creating", or "God is sovereign". It was difficult to explain to them what God is doing in relation to this crisis facing our world, and she would appreciate more being said in this area by the Council.

Addressing the Moderator, Dr Westra referred to his use of the image of Creation in searching for a new theo-centric eco-centric theology. Creation was the coming into being of the world and its inhabitants; God is not only with people but with nature too. Where, if we look upon creation in that way, do we look for God, where can we meet God? Where is God meeting us? She believed in a certain degree of anthropocentrism: God can only find us, we can only find God when we meet each other as human beings, when we serve one another. It is hard to find God in nature, which is not only beautiful but often threatening as well. She did not see Creation in terms of nature, but as a movement of God and people together turning chaos and darkness into light and into relationship.

The Moderator explained that his intention, vis à vis the prevailing theological concept of Creation, had been to re-emphasise some of the features of biblical and ancient theologies of Creation which he believed to be crucial in terms of a holistic understanding of Creation. Within that framework he had taken three points: 1) God, humanity and Creation in their inter-relatedness; 2) Christian biblical understanding of Creation as theocentric, which does not endanger the role and place of humanity within Creation; 3) the early Church's understanding of Creation. We do not need a static understanding of Creation but a dynamic one - it is an accomplished reality, but also a constant process.

Mr Mendez spoke as the only Central Committee member living in a communist country - Cuba - where Christians see themselves at a crossroads, trying to be a prophetic voice while at the same time being called to work out an ethics for life. It is not only a matter of being a prophetic voice but of being a useful instrument for education and transformation. Because of the economic situation people see themselves as second class citizens rather than as human beings in the likeness of God. We must seek a world in which there is a just distribution of the basic necessities of life that preserves the value of the human being. The prophetic role of the church implies a creative participation in the renewal and recon-struction of society as a responsibility to be shared among all.

Dr Turner was grateful for the Moderator's analysis of the issue of justice and ecology, but was discouraged when he assigned the role of the church to the search for justice and ecology. He found a contradiction in the Moderator's hope for the church yet a denial of its search for renewal, in ecological issues. Why did he divorce the churches in this search for a solution? The Moderator responded that as Church we cannot endorse a given system nor can we propose an alternative. But we can and should criticise the existing structures and systems if they are not in line with ethical Christian principles. Beyond that, he was proposing that we participate in all the processes aimed at reshaping societies and their political, ecological and economic systems. The prophetic role of the church is not just to denounce but to initiate the kind of processes that will lead societies towards fuller participation, justice, democracy, and respect of human rights.

Bishop Okullu referred to the forthcoming elections in South Africa described by Dr Raiser as "non-racist, truly democratic". This made him nervous because in Kenya they had thought democracy and political changes were the same thing, but, after multi-party elections, they had discovered that the old tyrannies and dictatorships were being put back in place. He warned that political changes were not the same as democracy. The churches in South Africa, and all those living in Africa, must realise that these changes will bring challenges, but they still have to go on struggling to put democracy in place. Dr Raiser agreed that true democratisation had not yet been achieved in Kenya and other countries, and this whole issue did indeed give grounds for anxiety and concern about how the process in South Africa would in fact develop.

Ms Nontawasee stressed the urgency of the Council studying further the issue of population and development, and the related dimension of migrants - people on the move - and the effect they have, arriving in large numbers in countries that can scarcely feed or house their own populations. She also hoped the WCC would take up the issue of the family in this Year of the Family.

Bishop Muttiah spoke about some of the predictions being made following research being done on cold fusion of hydrogen, which includes the possibility that cars might run on water. This would have an enormous effect on the environment! Until now, energy has been released from the atom by fission, but it seems that early in the 21st century it is likely that this will be done by fusion. That will mean the end of the fossil fuel age. How will the churches deal with this new paradigm? He felt that *koinonia* was the new area in which the churches should reflect theologically, along the lines outlined by the Moderator and the General Secretary.

Dr Raiser responded that the imagery of "from fission to fusion" in many ways underlined the move that both he and the Moderator had tried to suggest for our Christian thinking about ecumenical ethics.

IV. Response by the Central Committee

At a later session, Ms Gcabashe presented the report of the Committee on the General Secretariat, which had given consideration to the reports of both the Moderator and the General Secretary:

Reports of the General Secretary and the Moderator

Thanks were expressed to both the General Secretary and the Moderator for their reports. The Moderator's report combined an account of the stewardship of the work undertaken by the Executive Committee with a challenging exploration on the subject *Towards New Eco-Theological Paradigms*. Believing this analysis to be an important contribution to ecumenical thinking, the Committee referred this part of the report to Unit III for fuller consideration.

Ms Gcabashe expressed appreciation to the General Secretary for his style of leadership. His report combined a brilliant overall analysis of the work undertaken by the Units and staff of the Council since the last Central Committee meeting, with a most helpful analysis of the African context of the present meeting and a biblically-based vision of the future work of the Council. It was hoped that the General Secretary might share more fully with the Council on a future occasion his concern at the rapid spread of a "culture of violence" throughout the world.

It was noted that the Executive Committee was still considering the relationship between the General Secretary's and the Moderator's reports, but

believed that whatever the outcome of that discussion, the decisions and actions of the Executive Committee should appear on the agenda of each Central Committee meeting in such a way that questions could be raised and actions confirmed.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MODERATOR

Ms Rantakari expressed appreciation to Central Committee for the support and encouragement given to the Finance Committee during the difficult period of financial stringency. She was glad to be able to affirm, as the Moderator and the General Secretary had already indicated, that the Council's financial situation had improved. Since the report of the Finance Committee would be presented only after the Unit Committees had met, Ms Rantakari offered some background information to help the Committees be aware of the current situation.

Illustrating her remarks with some transparencies, she explained that, despite serious budget deficits predicted for 1991 and 1992, prompt action - including 20% reduction in staff and careful control of expenditure - reversed this trend, allowing the Council to attain a degree of financial stability. Although the 1993 accounts were not yet available, indications were that the results were satisfactory. The Financial Report would be circulated later in the year. If this pattern continued and the Council did not overreach its resources, there was every hope that the present level of staff and activities could be maintained, at least until the Eighth Assembly in 1998.

Ms Rantakari reiterated however that, according to the advice of the Cambridge Associates, the Council should increase its income by 2.2% each year above Swiss inflation (currently about 3.5%). That was why much effort was going into income development, in view also of the fact that the costs of the Assembly would have to be covered over the next five years.

In September 1993 the Executive Committee agreed, in light of the improved situation, to relax slightly both its strict budget criteria and the tight rules for new staff appointments, provided that funding was available for the period of an appointment. New rules had also been established to enable Units to use part of their Operating Balances for developing their work.

In March 1993 the Executive Committee had approved a new style of accounting and reporting which would be more flexible and transparent. The significant change in 1994 would therefore be that budgets and Financial Reports show the totality of the Council's work and not just the so-called Operating Budget.

Programmatic activities of the Units total nearly Sfr 95 million, while only about Sfr 6.5 million comes from undesignated (membership) contributions. A

priority concern must therefore be to seek greater commitment by member churches and donors to the Council's work as a whole - which means undesignated, not just designated contributions. It was encouraging to hear of the commitment of some of the host churches in South Africa to resume paying their membership contributions after a long period when this was not possible.

Ms Rantakari affirmed that the overall situation was encouraging but warned of the need to remain cautious about increasing the WCC's financial commitments until there is evidence that resources are available. If we believe in the Council and the development of its work in the service of the churches and the ecumenical movement, we must seek new sources of income to assure the future, which takes time. The Finance Committee therefore wished to emphasise income development through the implementation of the strategy approved by Central Committee in 1992 in the paper "Providing the Resources".

DELIBERATIVE SESSIONS

I. FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER

His Beatitude Parthenios, Patriarch of Alexandria, moderating, introduced the presentation on the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order that had taken place at Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in August 1993. To set the scene a series of slides was shown, accompanied by quotations from participants and the press read by Rev. Elizabeth Welch and members of staff.

Dr Mary Tanner, moderator of the Faith and Order Commission, addressed the Central Committee, focusing "On the Way to Santiago". She explained that the purpose of the World Conference was to give some account to the official representatives of our churches of the work done in the period since the Fourth World Conference in Montreal in 1963 and, in their response, to find directions for the future.

Out of all its work Faith and Order brought to Santiago the major studies carried out since Montreal: *Confessing the One Faith*; *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*; and *Church and World*. These were brought together in a single study document *Towards Koinonia in Faith, Life and Witness*, which contained an answer to one of the questions most often asked: where are we, and where are we going in the ecumenical movement? In this answer we built on the Canberra Assembly statement: *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling*.

A significant feature of the preparations for Santiago were the nine regional consultations which reflected on the theme out of very different and particular contexts. These turned the Conference from an event to a process by widening the community of those reflecting on the issues. The study document was sent to the churches for study and response. Then, a consultation between Faith and Order and JPIC (Unit III), aimed at bridging the gap between Faith and Order and Life and Work, resulted in the text *Costly Unity*.

Dr Paul Crow and **Rev. Eunice Santana** then related something of what happened at Santiago - 55% of participants came from Europe and North America, 45% from the South, while women constituted 38%. The Roman Catholic Church, which became a member of the Faith and Order Commission in 1968, sent delegates to a World Conference for the first time, their delegation of 32 being the fourth largest after Orthodox, Reformed and Lutheran; there was also a significant presence of Evangelical and Pentecostal theologians, as well as a group of younger theologians. Worship was once again central to the Santiago experience.

Many in their presentations at Santiago voiced their yearning for visible unity expressed in the idioms of different contexts. A few examples among many:

Mary Tanner, layperson, Church of England: Unless **all** our churches find ways of turning the ever growing pile of ecumenical texts into **shared life**, will not new divisions appear between those who do find ways to progress [toward visible unity] and those who do not?

Desmond Tutu, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town: Apartheid (racism) is too strong for a divided church...From our experience in South Africa there can be no question at all that a **united** church is a far more effective agent for justice and peace against oppression and injustice.

Mercedes García-Bachmann, Lutheran pastor, Argentina: Ecumenism must become alive at the roots of our churches. It must show itself not only in agreements signed by church hierarchs, but also in all our churches we must find the way to make unity concrete, real and engaged.

Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, Roman Catholic, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: The Catholic Church offers an irrevocable commitment to the search for visible unity...The commitment..to ecumenism is irrevocable because it sees ecumenism as a pastoral priority.

Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, Church of Greece: If communion (**koinonia**) is made a key idea in ecclesiology, mission is better understood and served not by placing the Gospel over against the world, but by inculturating the Gospel into the world.

Koinonia describes the richness of our life together in Christ: it points to communion, community, sharing, participating, solidarity, fellowship. All these realities point us to the divine life and love that flows between the persons of the Trinity.

Many insights and recommendations come from Santiago to the WCC and the churches. We must do all in our power to achieve recognition of our common baptism and to further our agreements on sharing the Eucharist and finding a mutually recognised ministry. We must discover the significance of *koinonia* for common ethical commitment and action.

Santiago allowed the voice of God to be heard. God still wills the unity of God's people. As the Message from Santiago says:

The world was made for this *koinonia* in God, a *koinonia* that has been won by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ...we say to the churches [and to the Central Committee]: *there is no turning back*, either from the goal of visible unity or from the single ecumenical movement that unites concern for the unity of the Church and concern for engagement in the struggles of the world.

Roman Catholic theologian **Rev. Jean-Marie Tillard** focused on the challenge of the future for the ecumenical movement. Faith and Order must remain faithful to its mission. Its mandate is to aid the churches in the quest for the visible unity of all Christians in the one faith, one common sacramental life, one common witness offered to Christ and his Father in the Holy Spirit. Yet it has become clear that in this quest, Faith and Order must take serious account of what is happening at local level and in the regions according to their particular cultural contexts.

Equally, Faith and Order must renew and intensify its relationship with the various bilateral dialogues, gathering up the fruits of their work especially in cases where points of convergence and consensus have been reached. It must also help the dialogues, it must "dialogue with the dialogues" in order to avoid the contradictions which may appear and hinder the cause of visible communion.

Within the World Council, Faith and Order must collaborate within Unit I and with the other Units letting itself be questioned by their work. But it must ask the Units, in a spirit of communion, at what points the quest for visible unity in faith and sacraments can be taken into *their* work.

The Faith and Order Commission, faithful to the recommendations from Santiago de Compostela and to its own identity, has confirmed its mission to offer its services to the *whole* ecumenical community. To this end, it chose to locate its work within the framework of the Canberra declaration on *koinonia* which, accepted by the Canberra Assembly, does not "belong" to Faith and Order but is the property of the ecumenical community. Further progress must take place within this common work which is itself already a fruit of *koinonia*.

The presentation ended with the song "Tell us, Lord" (written for the World Conference by Fr Milos Vesin), followed by the Santiago prayer.

In discussion, speakers expressed appreciation for the presentation. Referring to the study on Church and World, Mr Lodberg asked how future cooperation was foreseen between Unit I and Unit III. Secondly, he asked that some consideration be given to doing some local case studies to see how churches can act together in conflict situations. Dr Tanner responded that section IV at Santiago had continued the discussion around *Costly Unity* and assured Mr Lodberg that new insights were already emerging and work in this area was proceeding.

Dr Blei asked why there had not been a world conference before now - 30 years was a long gap. What was an ideal term between such meetings? Some say there

should no longer be world conferences of this nature. Metr. Athanasios felt that in the 30 years since Montreal many important events had taken place giving sufficient reasons for such a world gathering in 1993. He stressed the significance of Faith and Order's work for the Orthodox.

Dr Tanner recalled the work done in the period since 1963 which included the publication of BEM and its follow-up, with Faith and Order engaging the churches in conversation around these issues. The call for a Fifth World Conference was made at Lima (1982), but the number of world conferences that can be held between assemblies is limited and it was necessary to wait till after Canberra.

Dr Tolen asked about the status of the convergence study on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry and whether any progress had been made on this at Santiago. What had happened at grassroots level? The Christian faith is under attack in many places today and for many young people Christianity is beyond comprehension. Has any progress been made towards visible unity? How do we answer the questions of those who see the church as divided, thus lacking credibility?

Dr Tanner replied that participants at Santiago reported on a variety of different experiences resulting from BEM: many spoke of relationships that had changed on the basis of these theological convergences, while others felt they had had little effect. We must all go on challenging our churches with these questions. Santiago highlighted areas where more convergence is necessary, including baptism and re-baptism; the ordination of women; apostolicity and succession. Perhaps the time was now ripe for taking up some of these issues which once seemed intractable.

Ms Paulin asked what had united those who were at Santiago? Is unity the goal of serving together in Christ? Dr Tanner believed that in praying and living together participants discovered their unity in Christ - that we do already share a degree of communion. But we have to make this ever more visible.

Faith and Order was of particular importance for the Roman Catholic Church, said Msgr Radano: it is there that the RCC and the WCC meet most intensively because of the common goal of the search for visible unity. Santiago was the first time such a meeting had taken place in a predominantly Catholic country; it was also the first time that Catholic delegates had been voting members at such a conference, and their participation was greatly appreciated.

Mr Birmelé remarked on the spirit of solidarity present at Santiago which had been an inspiration to renew commitment to the ecumenical movement. He urged Faith and Order to do further work in the area of *koinonia*, because there are clearly several different ways of understanding it, varying from "faith in the church" to commitment to "a better humanity". We must achieve more clarity in our perception of *koinonia* if we are to be understood by those in our churches.

Dr Tanner felt that one of the creative things about the concept of *koinonia* was the way it allowed us to hold together the life and love of the trinitarian God - a life into which we are drawn through baptism and the making visible of that life in our life together in the Church - this is its strength. But we must safeguard against the danger of using *koinonia* for a life we create ourselves and not for that gift given by God.

Bishop Ambrosius saw Faith and Order first as a movement seeking visible unity, and felt this should remain its primary task. Its value and promise for the future lies in the constant tension between classical theology and the theologies of today. It was therefore important to accord the Faith and Order Commission a more central focus as we prepare for a Jubilee assembly.

Dr Wilkens asked to what extent the main theological agreements achieved so far have actually reached and been taken up in the local churches. An EKD survey had shown that the Lima Liturgy is used by local congregations, but the Lima documents on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry have little influence. There is thus a gap between local ecumenism and that practised at world meetings. What did the Faith and Order Commission intend to do to bridge that gap? The regional consultations held in preparation for Santiago were helpful in allowing for a wider participation; could there be more attempt at regionalising the work of Faith and Order so that local churches can share their concerns?

Faith and Order would indeed take seriously what it had learned about the need for regional work, responded Dr Tanner. At the same time, we have to make a distinction between holding a meeting in a region and a truly regional meeting with an agenda determined by the concerns of that region.

Ms Welch agreed that much of the work done on BEM had not been taken up in the local churches, and wondered how Faith and Order planned to carry this process forward, so that within the churches people can really live out the concerns that have emerged from Santiago.

Dr Beach, representing the Seventh Day Adventists and present at the world conference, felt that Santiago was worthy of the tradition set by Edinburgh, Lausanne, Lund and Montreal. The theme of *koinonia* was opportune and presented a rich view of unity. New voices were heard, especially those of evangelicals and pentecostals.

Deacon Jebejian, a steward both at Santiago and at Johannesburg, appreciated the unforgettable experience of being able to dialogue with theologians, both younger and older, and he stressed the importance of continuing to involve younger theologians in Faith and Order's ongoing work. Dr Tanner underlined the significance of the statement by the younger theologians who had challenged Faith and Order to continue using the comparative and convergence to consensus method but also the contextual encouraging context to speak to the context.

Bishop Serapion referred to the programme on biblical and theological reflection on diakonia embarked on by Unit IV and wondered how Faith and Order could be of assistance to Unit IV in this task.

For Dr Patelos, the study on the Apostolic Faith remained of great relevance and he asked how Faith and Order set its priorities. Regarding the importance of ecumenical ethics, in a wide range of issues today society is seeking ethical guidance, and if the WCC is not able to respond to this appeal, who else in the Christian world would do so? The World Conference demonstrated that Faith and Order is an integral part of the WCC. There are many overlapping points between the four programme units in which Faith and Order can play a role, and these must be kept in mind.

Dr Tanner concluded by quoting Archbishop Tutu: "apartheid is too strong for a divided church". In the same way, the economic and ecological concerns of the world are too strong for a divided church. We must learn to live together on the knife edge of death and resurrection. Here together we find hope for the world's struggles, and this is where we discover the divine energy to confront together the principalities and powers of this world. The unity of the church and the struggle for justice and peace belong inextricably together.

Expressing appreciation to those involved for their participation, His Beatitude Parthenios closed the session.

II. WCC/RCC RELATIONS

Rev. Nelida Ritchie, presiding, opened the session by recalling that the primary task of the Joint Working Group (JWG) outlined by the Canberra Assembly was to assess the common ground shared and to develop new perspectives for greater collaboration between the WCC and the RCC. In November 1993 a meeting of the WCC Officers with senior representatives of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) had demonstrated the ecumenical commitment of the RCC to closer relationships.

Participants had received the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* published by the PCPCU which could be used for more in-depth study and evaluation of common ecumenical endeavours.

Msgr John Mutiso-Mbinda (PCPCU) and co-secretary of the JWG, was invited to address the Central Committee. He began by giving a summary of activities in which WCC and RCC had been jointly involved since the Second Vatican Council, noting the formation of the JWG in 1965 and the inclusion of Catholic theologians as full voting members in the Commission on Faith and Order since 1968. RCC commitment to Faith and Order was wholehearted, as evidenced by the serious evaluation of the BEM document in 1987, and more recently by the intensive RCC participation in the Fifth

World Conference of Faith and Order at Santiago de Compostela in August 1993.

Other means of cooperation include the presence of a Catholic staff person in Unit II's stream on Mission and Evangelism in Unity, and a member of the teaching staff at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey. There was also growing contact between WCC member churches and Catholic churches at regional and national level. Of course there are sometimes difficulties, but on both sides our relationships indicate a deep commitment to the cause of Christian Unity.

The basis for relationship is the understanding that there is one ecumenical movement with a common goal of visible Christian unity. Secondly, it is unique in that it involves on the one hand a universal Church, and on the other a council of churches. At the same time, many of the WCC's member churches belong to Christian World Communions which are engaged in international bilateral dialogues with the Catholic Church through the PCPCU.

Msgr Mutiso-Mbinda reminded Central Committee of the JWG's **mandate**:

- to promote, monitor and coordinate relations and cooperation between the RCC and the WCC;
- to contribute to ecumenical endeavours by promoting theological exchange between the RCC and the WCC through competent bodies, on their respective reflections on issues confronting the churches in our constantly evolving world;
- to help in assessing the ecumenical situation, stimulating the search for visible unity and common Christian witness, and giving careful attention to concrete needs in particular situations at regional, national and local levels;
- to support and encourage activities that contribute to deeper ecumenical progress between the two parent bodies.

Within this framework are three levels: theological reflection through the Faith and Order Commission; missiological thinking in Unit II; bilateral relations and ongoing collaboration through invitations to each other's meetings (for which there are mutually accepted guidelines), staff visits, exchange of information and documentation, etc.

Account must be taken of the different structures of the WCC and the RCC. Like the WCC, the PCPCU has responsibilities that govern its actions and bind it to certain procedures. The most difficult area for ongoing cooperation has been in the social field, but progress is now being made and possibilities for collaboration are being explored.

Increasingly, the RCC is a member of a council of churches at local, national or regional level; these are among the most important forms of ecumenical cooperation. But the question of an NCC, of which the RCC is a member, seeking associate membership in the WCC is a delicate matter requiring decision by the member churches. Given the self-understanding of the RCC, the Bishop or Conference of Bishops joining a council does so as part of the RCC. Should a new relation develop between that council and the WCC, the Catholic Bishops in that council would continue to relate to the WCC through the Holy See.

The experience of a universal communion, closely bonded in faith and life, is a gift Catholics believe their Church can offer to the ecumenical movement, whether in local contacts or in the international context between the WCC and the RCC.

Rev. John Reardon introduced his remarks about Roman Catholic involvement in the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI) by describing two different kinds of ecumenism. One kind of ecumenism is based on drawing out energy and expertise from the churches: it goes ahead of them, inviting them to follow if they can. But often the churches cannot absorb this ecumenical agenda developed by the "experts" and so a gap forms between the churches on one hand and the ecumenical enthusiasts on the other. The benefit is that there is always something to challenge the churches; but the problem is that the ecumenical agenda runs parallel to that of the churches rather than penetrating their decision-making and priority-setting mechanisms.

The other form of ecumenism is based on the churches themselves: they set the priorities and agree to work on them together. They identify an ecumenical dimension in their life and work and develop forms of cooperation which recognise that they belong together, that their life and witness are enhanced by discovering ways of working that draw strength from the involvement of the churches. This may mean slower progress in ecumenical cooperation, but the ecumenical endeavour is recognised and owned by all.

It is to this latter form of ecumenism that we have committed ourselves in Britain and Ireland, said Mr Reardon. Membership of the CCBI - which came into being in 1990 - is wider than that of the former British Council of Churches, with the Roman Catholic Church as a full member.

Our decision-making is strengthened by the fact that the church leaders are involved; ecumenical engagement no longer belongs only to the few but is a recognised dimension of what it means to be Christian. We seek consensus rather than voting; since all the churches are involved, there is no question of imposing the will of the majority on those which have reservations about any course of action.

The Roman Catholic Church is different from most other member churches in that it does not have its own decision-making processes internally that involve its own wider membership. It has both an international structure and a localised one, and CCBI is learning to recognise that some of the wider ecclesial and doctrinal matters are decided in Rome. This means that the RCC is essentially diocesan rather than national, so its involvement ecumenically at national level can pose problems on both sides.

Nevertheless, our experience in Britain of ecumenism with full RC membership has been mostly positive, forcing us to take the member churches more seriously, giving us the potential of moving further forward in our ecumenical pilgrimage, and helping us to be more imaginative about what the churches can do together.

The Rev. Edward Cumberbatch, General Secretary of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), spoke from a regional perspective. The Roman Catholic Church -

Antilles Episcopal Conference - was a founder member of the CCC at its inception in 1973. But the AEC comprises those RC churches in only a little over 15% of the total regional population, thus placing certain limitations on the CCC in dealing with issues relevant to the interests of the RCC.

Prior to the formation of CCC, the RCC was regarded by Protestants in some areas with suspicion and even fear; the hierarchy consisted mainly of white ex-patriates. Today however the RCC's leaders are mainly indigenous, well-trained priests, forward-looking in "ecumenism and social change in obedience to Jesus Christ and in solidarity with the poor" (CCC's mandate).

The AEC can now be regarded as a model with respect to its support to the CCC and to the NCCs in the part of the region that it covers. Its ecumenical stance runs counter to that of the RCC in the Greater Antilles, which does not support the democratic process. The AEC disagrees with the conservative approach of its counterparts in Cuba and the Dominican Republic for example, and supports the democratic process in Haiti.

Some would contend that the RCC stands aloof from the ecumenical movement, which explains the complex attitude of the RC conferences in the Caribbean and the Americas. The Latin American Conference of Churches (CLAI) reports increasing cooperation amongst Roman Catholic communities, some of which are fast losing members to the Evangelicals and the Pentecostals.

The CCC, in its role as the binding force and facilitator in the ecumenical thrust in the Caribbean, must respect the theology and doctrines of all its member churches, which imposes a certain caution on its public pronouncements. The CCC is grateful for the presence and support of the AEC and enjoys full cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church within the constraints imposed by the Church's magisterium.

A number of points were raised in the ensuing discussion:

Bishop Serapion expressed appreciation for the model of cooperation described by Mr Reardon. But he felt that one area of cooperation with the RCC was missing - that of diakonia, which was an important potential area for working together, sharing biblical and theological reflection. Unit IV has developed means of sharing such as round tables and resource sharing groups, and he regretted that participation of the RCC in these activities was so limited. He hoped for further cooperation in the area of diakonia in the future.

Dr Love thanked the speakers for enabling a better understanding of WCC/RCC relations in the wider context. Some of the most exciting theological work being done in her region had come through the leadership of the RCC engaging with the Southern Baptists. Regarding the two models of ecumenism described by Mr Reardon, she felt that the most deeply dividing elements often arise from within constituencies and not through the vision imposed from outside. To whom should we listen within the churches? How do we keep people at a table and

deal with different understandings of our faith? On the issue of war, the leadership is fairly unified in contrast to many in their constituency, but on the subject of sexuality for example they are deeply divided. How can we stay together through conversations where some feel so offended by others' decisions that they cannot endure it any longer?

Mr Lodberg was grateful for the Ecumenical Directory, and quoted from para. 17 chapter I: "Catholics hold the firm conviction that the one Church of Christ *subsists* in the Catholic Church which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him". His difficulty lay in the word *subsists*, which was the reason for most of the problems that arose during the JPIC process. Out of his involvement in the conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation he wondered what the persistence with the word *subsists* would mean on our way towards recognition of other Christian denominations as true Christian Churches. Perhaps this was why we do not use the word *conciliarity* any more?

Pastor Twagirayesu was glad about the efforts being made to improve WCC/RCC relationships, but asked how long these would only be visible at international level? In our congregations we do not feel this friendliness and warmth. What happens to the results reported on and why are their effects not felt at local parish level? Was the RCC prepared to review theological affirmations that are obstacles to ecumenical initiatives in order to encourage unity and ecumenism in the churches?

Bishop Pasco explained that the Philippines were named after King Philip of Spain, the majority of the population being Roman Catholic. Despite the NCC's efforts to improve ecumenical relations, these have so far been in vain. He was therefore grateful for the Directory which he would use to challenge the Bishops' Conference that they should be faithful to their own Church's recommendations and implement them.

Fr Kishkovsky shared some experiences from the US where the RCC is not a member of the NCCC. Some bishops feel they should join, others are opposed, while yet others are calling for a new look at how NCC/RCC relationships should be structured in future. The general secretaries of the US Catholic Conference and the NCCCUSA meet regularly and provide a base for cooperation. In the framework of the NCCC Europe Committee there is cooperation with the US Catholic Conference on matters of common concern in Europe. In 1993 representatives from Russia participated in the Europe Conference, which may have contributed to improving RCC/Orthodox relations in Russia. For many years theological dialogue between the RCC and the Orthodox has taken place, while bishops from both churches meet regularly at local level.

Secondly, there is a special dimension in the US to the Uniate question that is affecting Orthodox/RCC relations in Central and Eastern Europe. A hundred

years ago, groups of Greek Catholic immigrants decided to join the Orthodox Church, so a large proportion of members of the Orthodox Church in America are descendants of those Greek Catholics. The tensions in Central and Eastern Europe have also caused some problems in the US but to a lesser extent because they are offset by the fact that there is a continuing dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics at every level. With regard to the former Yugoslavia, the Orthodox Church in America has a range of contacts among the different communities, but the war has completely ruptured relationships and leaves the churches facing the immense and complex task of bringing them together again.

Ms Nontawasee said that in Thailand only 0,7% of the population are Christian, and it is clear that a divided church in a broken world undermines any credible Christian witness. The Bishops' Conference is taking the lead in interreligious dialogue. She expressed appreciation for the recently published booklet on Ecumenical Formation - a helpful reminder of how important Protestant/Roman Catholic relations are. It states that "it must be clear...that inter-religious dialogue with other world religions...has goals that are specifically different from the goals of ecumenical dialogue among Christians." It would be helpful for the minority churches in Thailand if these goals could be further spelled out.

Bishop Bue was glad to hear these perspectives and developments for improving Protestant/Catholic relationships and theological dialogue. We need to respect each other and to pray together, as we do each year during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. He welcomed the WCC's initiative to enable meetings with Evangelicals and Pentecostals in Latin America; he had just returned from one where participants from the region spoke of difficulties in relationships where the RCC is the majority church. In some areas Protestants feel oppressed by the strong presence of the RCC, and when people there hear us discuss Protestant/Roman Catholic relations, they are offended. How can we spread the spirit of Vatican II and create respect and openness between the RCC and Evangelicals? Could the dialogue between Rome and Geneva help to improve the situation in Latin America?

Bishop Neill thanked Msgr Mutiso-Mbinda for pointing to the differences between the situation on national and regional level over against that on WCC level. With regard to Mr Reardon's presentation, there is a real difference between the two models of council. The Church of Ireland is working with both models - the Irish Council of Churches having the more traditional structure, while the CCBI is the model of which Mr Reardon spoke. It is costly for the churches to work and think ecumenically, though RCC participation is a positive aspect of the CCBI. A different model of council, with RCC participation, is a real commitment. And if we are really serious about relations with the RCC, should we not also reflect on what changes might be needed at WCC level?

Responding to some of the points raised, Msgr Mutiso-Mbinda addressed a point raised by Bishop Bue: first steps towards a dialogue between the RCC and some

Evangelical families were taken in 1977, when those interested in better relationships began to talk about questions of mission. Between 1977 and 1982 three sessions took place and deeper understanding had been reached on the concept of mission and how we understand the church. The results of the conversations were published and sent to the respective constituencies. So there have been endeavours to engage in dialogue; the question now is how to bring the findings from the international level to the local level.

In response to Pastor Twagirayesu, he said the situation in Rwanda was very different from that in Latin America and could not be compared. In Rwanda the rapprochement would necessitate still more time. This situation has to be approached on a low-key level in order to begin to break the ice.

Replying to Mr Lodberg, Msgr Mutiso-Mbinda agreed that the issue around the phrase *subsists in* is complicated, though not new since Vatican II. It is re-affirmed here in order to express the RCC's self-understanding, and it is out of this self-understanding that the RCC is engaging in the ecumenical movement. *Subsists in* does not mean *equals* and is not applicable to what the communion of churches is all about.

With reference to Dr Love's intervention, Dr Reardon pointed out that two models of ecumenism may exist while the RCC is not in full membership of a Council, but once the RCC is a member, these disappear. You find ways of working on difficult questions because you have already committed yourselves to one another as churches. CCBI had begun to explore some of these difficult issues because the commitment is there: the basis of the life of a Council is the commitment of the churches who are its members.

The Moderator closed the session by thanking all who had participated.

III. LAOS - THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD

Rev. Eunice Santana, presiding, welcomed participants and urged them to listen to the contributions of the laity - their ideas, aspirations and hopes, their ministries and challenges. What would the church be, and what would the World Council of Churches or the ecumenical movement be if we did not have the laity? This presentation was an opportunity to listen to many voices witnessing about happenings in the past and what was happening today.

The purpose of the presentation was to place the laity issue and how it should be enhanced on the agenda of the WCC, and to affirm the lay people of the Central Committee in their work in Central Committee, in their churches and in society.

As an introduction, a video was shown featuring lay people in all aspects of the church and movements for change throughout the world. Narrated by Ms Knushnud Azariah,

Mrs Tungane Williams and Fr George Tsetsis, it was a celebration of the laity, and gave an account of four decades of their history. The voice of the 1990s was that of Reikanne Mofokeng of South Africa aged 10.

Four representatives of the laity then spoke on **The Lay Movement Today**. Ms Cristina Bösenberg said the contribution made by different lay movements and the challenges they raised have been extremely important in the history of Christianity in Latin America. These movements developed out of concern for the social changes taking shape and the desire to exercise Christian social responsibility.

From their different standpoints, these initiatives - youth movements, lay professionals, Base Christian Communities - questioned traditional church structures. They emerged as an active new force in society, in possession of a truth: *the option for the poor*. From early days, the concept of training implied a dialectical relation, an inter-disciplinary process in which the church, its pastors and specialists learned from and were sustained by lay people while placing special expertise at their disposal.

Today the religious scene in Latin America has altered and it seems the changes are running counter to those of the 60s and 70s. Resurgence of a conservative tendency is seeking once again to make knowledge about God the private preserve of tradition, the hierarchy or a few charismatic leaders. As a result, lay people find themselves in the position of passive recipients of knowledge. The dialectic process and the enrichment of inter-disciplinary cooperation have been lost, and the churches' capacity for active commitment for change in the present social processes has diminished.

Against this background is a renewed concern about training linked to the laity. But why we are still talking about training for the laity? Why do we still think of the educational ministry as "lay training"? This makes it seem as though lay people were somehow "incomplete" in comparison to an illusion of completeness on the part of the ordained. The point at issue is thus: What do we mean by "laity"?

Mr Dimitre Kirov spoke of the **Church as Inclusive Community**. After the fall of the atheistic communist regime, the Orthodox Church was confronted by many challenges. As a result of severe oppression and restrictions on religion, the Church finds itself unprepared for the daily problems it has to face.

During the years of implanted materialistic atheism, a part of society directed itself towards a consumer way of living - looking for easy money, rejecting all things spiritual. Now, under new conditions, the politicians are again doing their best to subdue the Church, and with the help of their political and state power, they have caused a schism to appear in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. In the meantime, numerous sects and religious bodies are proselytising, organising a new religious space. The consequent religious intolerance could become open conflict as people struggle against the sects.

The Church needs time to heal her wounds and to allow a new generation to grow up. It is evident that the place and role of lay people is of tremendous importance. They are

also involved in the process of restoration, and in view of the shortage of trained clergy, they take an active part in running the church, constituting the membership of parish councils. Lay people take part in Orthodox brotherhoods, develop parish activities, lead Sunday schools, and raise funds for the restoration and rebuilding of churches.

Lay people are interested not only in the political side but also in church history, and there is a desire to increase the religious literacy of the people as a way of avoiding fundamentalism and indifference. In the Orthodox tradition, there is no division or contradiction between lay people and the hierarchy. Any problems or wounds are mutual, shared both by the hierarchy and by lay people for the Church is one body and Her Head is Jesus Christ.

Ms Beatrice Danquah talked about the place of the laity in the context of **inclusive community**, from the perspective of women and youth. Laity have a place in the church, if for no other reason than that they are in the majority in the community of faith. But this does not explain how they are there in the church, and that is what gives significance to the phrase "the context of inclusive community".

The language of democracy is a call for inclusive community. In Africa, contrary to traditional emphasis on old age as a sign of wisdom, the youth have been in leadership positions and led the struggle for political independence. Most members of our churches are women and youth, and their contribution to church activities cannot be over-emphasised. Yet there is a tendency not to entrust them with certain responsibilities traditionally carried out by men. So we must ask whether or not women and youth can make an effective contribution to the development of the church, since those few who have been entrusted with some level of responsibility have proved their worth? Those churches which have not yet opened up to this concept of inclusive community must be urged to do so, keeping in view what is happening in the world around.

The church cannot advance without the effective participation of all its members - both lay and ordained. Marginalising women and youth will not augur well for the total development and growth of the church. As lay women and youth, our challenge to the church is that we are people with varied skills, intelligence and abilities which we can contribute to the fulfilment of the mission of the church. If the churches claim to be in solidarity with women and youth, this must be made visible in their acceptance of women and youth as equals, as an indispensable part of the Inclusive Community, and as a part of God's people.

Dr Fritz Erich Anhelm, (Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe) reminded his audience that the Amsterdam Assembly noted the fact that 99% of those in the churches are lay people. The **First World Convention of Lay Centres, Academies and Movements for Social Concern** was held in Montreat (USA) in September 1993, under the theme *Weaving Communities of Hope*.

Many participants saw this gathering as a historic momentum in the story of the ecumenical lay movement. What led to it? First, the rediscovery of the laity issue after

a long period of silence - a reopening of the ecumenical discussion of the laity. This was no longer linked only to the individual or to the dualism of clergy and laity; it goes back to *laos* - the people of God - and opens up the horizon to those groups, initiatives and movements, all over the world, struggling for justice and participation. Laity in this understanding is seen as the faith-based part of civil society; it bridges spirituality and secularity, *koinonia* and community, the promise of the Kingdom and the struggle for justice, peace and integrity of creation in our daily lives.

The Convention worked in 15 workshops, with three basic strands:

- participation focused on ecumenical learning, laity formation and lay leaders' training; a series of courses for leadership in lay training is planned in different parts of the world in the next few years;
- justice and sustainability focused on the debt issue and climate change. A statement on the debt issue signed by participants at Montreat was sent by the WCC General Secretary to the IMF and the World Bank, which have offered a slight possibility for a dialogue;
- regionalised networks of lay centres were encouraged to intensify their world-wide communication system by using e-mail for urgent solidarity actions and exchange of information. The Laity stream in Unit I needs to be equipped to make it possible to meet the new challenges, and bring together activities that are at present separated.

Reopening the ecumenical discussion of the laity goes far beyond the work of lay centres. A letter sent out from Montreat asks the people of God to join the process of rediscovering the role of lay people in the ecumenical movement. The revival of this discussion could become an important tool in strengthening our common vision towards a just, participatory and sustainable world.

In discussion, the ecumenical aspect of the laity was stressed by Ms Ganaba. Much of our work is done by theologians and only a few can participate in assemblies and meetings - so where are the people? The European Gathering of Congregational Groups in Potsdam, Germany in July 1993 was an encouraging step in a long-term process on renewal of local congregations in mission. It brought together (mostly unordained) representatives of some 40 congregations from all over Europe, with resource persons from Africa, Asia and Latin America, under the theme *Hear what the Spirit says to the Churches*. They prayed together and shared experiences in mission, diakonia and liturgical renewal, and experienced community across national and denominational boundaries. She urged that similar gatherings be held elsewhere to increase participation in the ecumenical movement among those in local parishes.

Ms Engel was grateful for the letter to the whole people of God from the European Gathering which encouraged those at the grassroots to affirm that all God's people live by the same spirit. She pleaded with clergy and other experts to recognise that those who not ordained are of equal value in God's sight and to provide space for lay people to contribute their gifts also. She called on the WCC to maintain the policy of *quotas* to ensure full participation of the whole people of God in its work.

Mr Mendez spoke of the strong movement of the laity, especially young people, in Latin America today. Providing greater space for participation by the laity in the total life and mission of the church would counteract the effects of the alienating message being preached by many new religious movements and sects. A strong movement of the laity can give dynamism to all the work of the church in Latin America and the Caribbean, and he was glad that the WCC was bringing about a rediscovery of the important role of the laity.

Pastor Twagirayesu had difficulty identifying the problem that gave rise to the need for stressing the importance of the laity. Of course the church is made up of lay people - they are the basis of the church, and he challenged the view that the laity was isolated within the church.

There was an urgent need to recruit and train lay people to serve mainly as volunteer leaders in the churches of the Czech Republic, said Ms Mandysova, since the State will soon cease its support for clergy salaries, and many smaller congregations will be unable to support their pastors. The first task is to find lay persons, men and women, and to train and encourage them; there is therefore a great need for training centres and educational possibilities. She asked for assistance in the enormous task the church was facing in her country.

Bishop Bue called for greater clarity in defining the term *laity*. He urged a return to the concept of the laity as described in the New Testament based on the recognition of the priesthood of all believers - we are all pastors, every Christian must give a witness to his faith in his life, and the best way to do this is in the framework of the church. If Christians start to organise themselves outside the church, it may be because we are getting too far away from the laity in the biblical sense: the laity consists of all people who belong to God.

Mr Koshy expressed satisfaction that a plenary had been devoted to the laity. He observed that laymen, as distinct from laywomen, were almost absent from membership of Central Committee. While the laity work in Unit I relates mainly to lay centres and lay movements, many churches have laity departments which are involved in lay training and theological fora for the laity. He urged that the WCC establish closer relationships with laity departments of member churches.

Responding to some of the comments made in the discussion, Dr Raiser underlined Pastor Twagirayesu's affirmation that the church is the laity. If we believed this and lived accordingly, we would not have a problem. But the fact that he asked what the problem is, suggests that there is one! The central issue before our churches now is to share in the reconstruction of human community, weaving communities of hope. Yet the churches themselves are often perceived today less as communities of hope than as alienating forces, and this leads people to seek community elsewhere.

We have operated with the distinction between clergy and laity, and are

comforted by Peter's words about the priesthood of all believers - but that makes the priest the norm. Should not those of us who are ordained rather consider ourselves as part of the laity, the people of God, and not assume that we are the ones who determine what the church is?

Finally, Dr Raiser stressed the need to continue working on this new profile of the laity. This is a decisive time for the ecumenical movement and the WCC, and he was encouraged that this new consciousness about the laity was taking shape from below and was not something the WCC had to initiate. The challenge was whether the WCC was prepared to recognise what is taking place among the people of God. And recognising it, would it be ready to respond?

Concluding the session, Ms Santana spoke of *LAOS* meaning "the whole people" - including both lay and ordained. A banner was unfurled bearing the words *LAOS - THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD*. Recalling that in the New Testament *Laos* was used to refer to the Christians, the people of God, while *Laicos* meant one who was a member of the community of Christ, Ms Santana called on all lay persons present to stand and sing the hymn "Weave us together, together in love" - and all participants rose and joined in the singing.

IV. PRESENTATION BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCHES

Bishop Peter Storey introduced a series of video and slide presentations and gave a commentary on the different aspects depicted. He was aware that participants knew a good deal about South Africa, but this was an attempt to help them to feel and to share the strange mixture of pain and hope which is South Africa - to see through the shifting daily events which blur our vision to the deep work which God is doing there.

You are kept informed of the public witness of the church through the news media, said Bishop Storey. This presentation was intended to introduce a few examples of the small works of mercy which have kept hope alive among God's people in this land. It would talk about poverty but also about dignity; about violence but also about peacemaking; of signs of hope in the midst of despair. It would move from the past that you helped us transform to the future which many prayed, pleaded, protested, resisted and suffered to bring about. It would show a people who endured the pain of bondage, now learning how to exercise freedom.

Some participants came from places where violence, death and destruction are more intense than in South Africa. One of the miracles of South Africa is that, while negotiating a revolution of massive proportions, most parts of the land are relatively calm. The supreme tragedy of South Africa's violence is that a people who endured so much oppression during the darkest days of apartheid, refusing to be divided, are now tearing one another to pieces just as the sun begins to

rise. The apartheid monster is dying, but in its death throes it has given birth to hideously deformed step-children, and violence is the ugliest of them all.

South Africa is no stranger to violence: since 1811 there has been an average of one war, rebellion or uprising every three years. Apartheid violently removed three million people from their homes; criminalised 19 million people through its pass laws; detained 73,000 people without trial, and hanged 90% of those executed in the Western world.

But why has the number of deaths from political and criminal violence risen so dramatically since negotiations began? Why is the success of every negotiation accompanied by more bloodshed? Why is it still the same people who die when they are supposed to be on the edge of victory? A series of slides provided statistics on crime and political violence over the past few years.

The impact of a long resistance struggle has left its scars. When the law is a thief it becomes a virtue to break the law. Poverty, joblessness and alienation all play their part. Some crimes are the legacy of apartheid, others are the result of poverty and hopelessness. But it means the raw material is there for the unscrupulous to harness for political gain - and this they are doing.

Some broad explanations for the use of violence by the players in the negotiation process have been identified:

- violence to halt or reverse the process. Those opposed to negotiation foment violence at critical turning points in order to demonstrate that the negotiations are unworkable and should be abandoned in favour of a return to conflict;
- violence to prevent marginalisation. Political actors who fear exclusion from political power in the new order may foment violence at critical points in the negotiations to ensure that their interests are protected in the final agreement;
- violence to destabilise the opponent. Those who fear the strength of an opponent may see an advantage in fomenting violence to seize tactical advantage or territory.
- "opportunistic" violence, where localised warlords or criminal elements or rogue political groups act for their own power motives, with or without the approval of their political leaders.

The result of different parties and organisations in South Africa using some or all these tactics is a mosaic of violence which is confusing and complex. Patterns of violence show a bewildering variety of cruelty and terror, with the common factor being that no-one in the black community can feel secure in their day-to-day lives.

Of the political groupings, none has clean hands, though it may be argued that some hands are dirtier than others. The role of the police is ambivalent: while some seem to want a new image, there are too many who still see their uniform as a licence to kill. Time and again they are accused of taking sides, of killing

when they could have acted with restraint. Their attitude is not helped by the fact that they are themselves also being killed in large numbers.

The government has failed to deal effectively with the violence, whether deliberately or due to its loss of authority is not clear. But the people are justified in asking who profits most from the destabilisation of black communities.

Regarding peace initiatives, the National Peace Accord is doing valiant work, with thousands of dedicated people risking their lives as monitors and peace-makers. But inherent flaws in the Accord itself serve to weaken it as a credible instrument. Many grassroots peace initiatives are doing amazing work, while international monitors - United Nations, Commonwealth, European Community, EMPSA - are crucial, and their presence has defused many situations. A national Peace-keeping Force is being formed, but the vision of this multi-party impartial unit is weakened by the refusal of some groups to participate.

This part of the presentation concluded with the showing of a video describing some of the work going on in preparing people for the elections.

Rev. Frank Chikane, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, was invited to take the floor. He was currently on leave from that position in order to carry out his tasks as a member of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the body responsible for establishing the procedures for the forthcoming elections and to ensure that they are free and fair.

Mr Chikane added his personal words of welcome to members of the Central Committee, explaining that his appointment to the IEC deprived him of spending more time with them. He described the task of the IEC - which entailed setting up the mechanism to enable 22 million electors to vote - and asked for the prayers of participants during this period of preparation for the elections.

Hope was a difficult word. For a few people in South Africa some changes had occurred, but for others nothing had changed. For some, the dramatic developments resulting in a new but interim structure provided promise of hope, whereas for others it spelled disaster.

We must not forget those who have been imprisoned and tortured, those who have died in the struggle. And we must remember those who would soon be called upon to take office in the new government. We must be hopeful that we will be victors in a new society; we must hope for justice - while the church must continue to stand for justice, and make sure that justice is done.

A new form of democracy is emerging in some of our communities: people want to vote for the person they believe can represent them, and they want to be able to communicate with that person. Our hope is based on our faith which has carried us through up to now, and it will carry us through into the future.

Mr Chikane affirmed his belief that God is with us and will be with us in the struggle to ensure that justice is done in South Africa and throughout the world.

The presentation was brought to a climax by **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**. Echoing Bishop Mogoba at the Opening Worship, he affirmed that the age of miracles was not over - one of the greatest signs of a miracle was the presence here in South Africa of the members of the WCC Central Committee!

In his own unique fashion, and interspersing his remarks with anecdotes, the Archbishop expressed his thanks to the churches for their constant support and prayers for the people of South Africa as they struggled against apartheid. In saying "thank you", he assured his audience that these hackneyed words were shot through with an incredible emotion and feeling and meaning. He thanked not only those present, but those whom they represented, who have done so much to bring South Africa to the point it has reached today.

The World Council of Churches had enabled those in South Africa to see ecclesiology come alive. What chance did the government have when we were being prayed for by people all over the world? If any good has come of our struggle, it has been because of those everywhere who have stood by us.

Why are we hopeful? The Archbishop told how, soon after Nelson Mandela and others were released from prison after 27 years, he was to meet with them. One might expect them to be angry, bitter, sorry for themselves. But no - these men had such an incredible capacity to laugh! And their capacity to forgive was amazing. This was and is a lesson for us - we must all learn to forgive, because anger and bitterness only destroy.

Of course the present violence appals us. Yet it has not engulfed the whole country and remains restricted to a few areas. And it is not racial violence. When the country was on the verge of catastrophe, at the funeral of Chris Hani in 1993, everyone said "We are all going to be free, black and white together. We are unstoppable - the rainbow people of God!" Our people are incredibly resilient - they laugh when you think they should be crying. Pastors among you will agree that almost always when you think you are going to minister to someone, they minister to you.

Our God is Immanuel, God with us. We tell our people that even when they walk through fire and water they will not be overwhelmed because God is with them. This is the same God who delivered so many in the past who comes to deliver us. He brings order out of chaos as he did at the creation, at the crucifixion - yet Easter happened, and Christians must be prisoners of hope because this is God's world and he is in charge. But sometimes you want to whisper in God's ear and say "Why don't you make it slightly more obvious that you are in charge?"

**V. THE ECUMENICAL DECADE:
CHURCHES IN SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN**
"Giving the Decade back to the Churches"

Bishop Vinton Anderson, presiding, began by drawing attention to four issues emerging time and again from women around the world that must be included on the agenda of the churches for their action:

- women's full and creative participation in the life of the churches;
- violence against women in its various forms and dimensions;
- the global economic crisis and its effects upon women;
- racism and xenophobia and their impact on women.

Since women make up the major part of the population, and of the membership of many of our churches, we cannot be silent in response to these issues. The title "Giving the Decade back to the Churches" is a reminder that many churches have not yet given serious attention to the Decade and that in some places it is still seen in terms of a "women's decade".

There followed a presentation including a number of poems⁵ written by women, slides depicting instances of violence against women, interspersed with drum beats, singing, and the sound of chiming bells. A dialogue among a group of six women and six men described examples of violence as well as ways being used to respond to the issue, to increase the awareness of the churches and mobilise them to action in solidarity with women who suffer such violence and abuse.

- A network of women of colour was launched in October 1992 called Sisters in Struggle to Eliminate Racism and Sexism (SISTERS). Such initiatives against racism and violence in society have come out of the determination to challenge structures of church and society that have diminished women.
- Women have identified the roots of violence in economic, political, social and cultural realities which have undergirded our societies. In the culture of violence and militarism that pervades the world, women are primary victims. Women have identified the industrially oriented development paradigm as a source of discrimination and violence because of its systematic exclusion of the value of women's knowledge and experience and its abuse of their sexuality.
- Women speak of violence that includes the obvious, overt forms expressed in domestic violence - rape, both in war situations and in everyday contexts; sexual harassment and abuse; prostitution of women related to tourism, and the increasing prostitution of children. But there are also more subtle forms of violence which include the putting down of women and undermining the contributions they make to societies.
- The churches have not spoken out strongly enough against these forms of violence. Women also identify the violence they experience within the structures of the church.

⁵ See Appendix VI - Documents available on request (no.3.4)

This includes more overt manifestations such as sexual abuse or harassment in ecumenical gatherings, as well as violence in more subtle forms such as the denial of participation of women in all aspects of church life and the exclusion of their experiences in the language and symbols of worship and liturgy.

- As women's voices are becoming heard after such a long time of silence, the churches have been challenged to relook at basic theological formulations that have given tacit legitimisation for the racism and sexism in our societies. Women call on the women and men of the church to express solidarity with networks such as SISTERS, providing resources to support women in their efforts to create an environment free of violence, and to stand in solidarity by supporting and empowering local women's groups.

Reference was made to the aims of the Decade and the mid-Decade ecumenical team visits, suggesting some of the ways in which churches can take up these issues. Already there are some men and women working together to find better and more just ways of sharing resources. Examples were given of initiatives under way in all the regions to analyse and prioritise needs and set guidelines for ecumenical sharing of resources.

Speakers in the ensuing discussion expressed appreciation for the presentation and for the work of all those involved in promoting the Decade. Many shared stories and experiences from their home areas, some describing encouraging progress, others admitting that little was being done.

Ms Rani told how in a South Indian village women were killed or abused after a lower caste person had drawn drinking water from a tap belonging to a higher caste community. The Lutheran Churches were helping rehabilitate these women to a new area, but it has been a heartbreaking experience for all concerned.

Dr Patelos pointed out that not all the problems related to violence affect only women: the struggle for social justice is a concern of all - women and men. Secondly, the world expects the churches to be attentive to these issues and we have to see the theological and pastoral aspects of the problem together.

Dr Kässmann emphasised the need for the churches to keep in touch with the secular aspects of the issue, and wondered whether any contacts had yet been made in relation to the UN meeting on women to be held in China in 1995. It would appear that, although some were preparing for this with enthusiasm, others were questioning their participation in view of the human rights situation in China. She asked Unit III to monitor whether there would be a contribution by the churches to this event.

Mr Kuchera felt that what was lacking so far in relation to the Decade was a real effort by the churches to get men and women to sit down together and establish what they are committed to do to ensure their solidarity with women. But some real action must be taken quickly, because the Decade is already past its mid-point.

Ms Kathindi hoped the presentation would not end in this meeting room but would be shared with the churches to encourage their solidarity with women and to ensure that men become involved. The team visits would also help churches be more aware of the problems and of the need for their action. But they do need support in order to ensure that the remaining years of the Decade are meaningful to women both in the churches and in society.

Ms Scoutas was reassured that the WCC was addressing the issue of violence against women, but wondered to what extent it was making this work relevant and whether the message was getting across. Secondly, she was concerned that we do not sufficiently address the question of abuse and violence directed against children and youth. The Orthodox see motherhood as a ministry, yet it is women who are forced to endure torture and violence in the home and in society and this transcends all cultural and church barriers. It is time to give women back their dignity and to emphasise that youth are suffering also.

Ms Nontawasee gave an example of men who get caught up in the dilemma of faith and culture - they are afraid of helping their wives in domestic chores because of what their neighbours would say, identifying them as being controlled by their wives. So men need to be liberated also. A team visit might help the churches grapple with the socialisation process and the deeply rooted cultural traditions that work against change in society.

Dr Westra asked for more details on what had happened in the Decade so far, where success had been achieved and what problems had been identified. Where specifically was the support of Central Committee members required? Was any feminist theology being developed such as biblical exegesis or hermeneutics? How do we as women read the bible - which came into being in a patriarchal culture? The ecumenical movement offers a unique meeting place across cultural barriers and should provide opportunity to develop a theology that is inspiring for both women and men.

In South Africa, said Ms Gcabashe, women believe that the political struggle for liberation is as important as the struggle for liberation for women. The theme of this plenary suggests that the churches have not taken much interest in the Decade so far, and she urged the churches represented in Central Committee to commit themselves to promote the participation of women, and to face up to the issue of the violence women have been suffering in silence. Now they are beginning to speak up, the churches must listen and hear their cries and respond.

Mr Mendez related how he had been invited to take part in a team visit to Nicaragua and Panama, and though he had visited both countries before, this time he had not been granted visas. The feeling of discrimination he experienced had nevertheless helped him to understand something of the discrimination felt by women and others who are left out, marginalised. He was grateful for the lessons that women are teaching us.

Dr Garrett drew attention to another group of women suffering violence - in the churches of the North. The churches must be watchful and ready to expose the violence, providing counselling and sanctuary to those who suffer silently.

Ms Pye, of the Society of Friends, admitted that in Canada the Decade had become a movement of women in the churches in solidarity with women. She hoped the receptiveness to this presentation on violence against women would not just stay in the memories of participants but reach down to the grassroots where women are trying to bring about solidarity of the churches with women.

Also referring to the Canadian situation, Ms Bazett proposed that the churches be asked to consider appointing committees to carry forward the aims of the Decade composed of equal numbers of men and women. Then the churches might take back the Decade into their hands and not simply leave it with the women. Secondly, she expressed appreciation for the guidelines prepared by the WCC Women's Desk on dealing with sexual harassment in meetings. When the matter was raised at the Friends' Yearly Meeting, many men did not believe it was relevant for them, until they heard the stories told by some women. Now the Friends have their own guidelines in place, thanks to the WCC's initiative.

Bishop Talbert affirmed the importance for churches to be committed to standing in solidarity with women. As a bishop he had to deal with cases of sexual misconduct in his church, and this form of violence and abuse against women must also be dealt with in a constructive manner. Dr Sherry considered that violence against women was one of the most important issues facing the churches and society as a whole. He hoped attention would be given also to the violence that continues to take place against lesbian women.

Ms Seddoh said that though women in Togo were hopeful when the Decade was launched, the economic problems facing them have led to a good deal of suffering. But they face another problem: they participate in the daily life of the churches, and they are listened to - until it comes to the decision-making processes. How can we bring back the Decade to the churches and find a way to get the message through? In helping the churches find ways of supporting women, we must hope that by the end of the Decade we will all be more committed so that we can go forward with confidence into the next century.

Metr. Chrysanthos said that in parishes in Cyprus, women are held in high esteem. In society, many women work closely with the church on social affairs, caring for those who are sick and suffering, the wounded and refugees. They do have rights within society, but we must ensure that their rights are protected, for in protecting women we protect the family and thus our nations.

Dr Wilkens wondered why the Decade had not so far achieved its goals: perhaps it was not too late to do a critical assessment as to why it had not met the high expectations of Central Committee and those who promoted it in the first place?

In her concluding remarks, Ms Mpumlwana addressed those in leadership positions, because in speaking of the church we mean those who make the decisions which only gradually filter through to those who feel the struggle on the ground. How do you handle issues that may divide your church down the middle? she asked. Do you simply put them aside or hand them to the women's desk to deal with? Do you as a church leader live in such a way that women can work with you and feel that you are empowering them? Can you accept the gifts they have to contribute to the life of the church? The churches are asked to dedicate themselves to the Decade, or to rededicate themselves for these last years of the Decade, as we take stock of the successes and failures.

Ms Best recalled an encounter with South African women the previous day, when they shared stories of abuse and violence and marginalising that they have put up with for so long. They are entering the political processes of the country in an admirable way, yet the church tells them to "submit to your husbands, don't complain about violence, hide your tears". This is what we must address - the feeling instilled in women that they are second class people.

Bishop Anderson, closing the session, announced that the plenary had given back the Decade into the hands of the churches to be in solidarity with women.

VI. THE CHALLENGES OF HIV/AIDS AND THE WCC's RESPONSE

Bishop Leslie Boseto, presiding, introduced the session, calling the attention of the churches to the continuing challenges of HIV/AIDS. The objectives of this session were:

- to provide a clear global picture and perspective of the AIDS pandemic and a sense of how each part fits into the whole;
- to find out where we are now in responding to the challenge of HIV/AIDS and what are the insights and concerns coming from the grassroots particularly on the Participatory Action Research on AIDS and the Community as a Source of Care and Healing done in Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire; and
- to express our solidarity and unity with those who have been touched with HIV/AIDS.

Bishop Boseto lit a candle to remind participants that "in the mysteries of life and death we encounter God; this encounter calls for trust and hope."

Dr Sigrun Mogedal, Unit II Commission moderator, gave a global picture of HIV/AIDS, referring to a recent illustration of the situation of HIV in the world from the World Health Organisation.

HIV/AIDS is a critical issue everywhere and for everybody; it affects men, women and children. It is a pandemic composed of many epidemics with common features but also with different characteristics which need to be understood in each local context; it is a problem that has to be seen and under-

stood in an interdependent world. The long period of invisible infection hides the urgency. More and more, HIV/AIDS exposes the particular vulnerability of women - 13 million women are expected to live with HIV by the year 2000.

The spread of HIV/AIDS is as much related to poverty and oppression as to the virus. The pandemic is expanding fastest in countries with poor economies. Global and national structural and political mechanisms that keep countries poor have multiple bearings on AIDS. It has to do with a whole range of issues which are interconnected: women and violence; war and conflicts; economic injustice and violation of human rights. HIV/AIDS is strongly related to human sexuality and behaviour. But human behaviour takes place in a social and cultural context which does not allow each individual a fair choice. Lack of education, economic independence, limited rights to reproductive choices are critical factors. Moral, cultural and socio-economic values and factors are all strong determinants of behaviour. Therefore there is no quick fix for AIDS. We are all part of it. And the church needs to be in the midst of it.

Finally, Dr Mogedal explained how HIV/AIDS affects the whole health care system. It is both a medical and a broader health issue. The modes of the viral transmission are known. There is an interplay between AIDS and other infectious diseases, notably tuberculosis. At the same time as the need for basic care is growing, the overall cost of advanced medical care is escalating, and global allocations to health are being reduced. Actual health spending is greatly influenced by interest groups and trends, often without maintaining commitment to basic care and support. In many countries health systems are falling apart. It is in this context that churches are challenged to mobilise congregational action for healing, support and prevention and to stand for equity and justice in health.

There followed a presentation on the WCC response to HIV/AIDS:

Dr Ruth Page referred to the statement on *AIDS and the Church as a Healing Community* (Central Committee, Geneva, January 1987). At that time, the Christian Medical Commission was mandated "to work closely with the Sub-units on Education and Church and Society in an effort to provide principles for the pastoral ministry of the church as a healing community to AIDS patients, and to make educational guidelines and preventive measures widely known to member churches".

Several international and regional meetings had taken place and publications on HIV/AIDS were produced from 1987 onwards. The most recent activity that would be reported in this plenary was the result of the 18-month Participatory Action Research on *AIDS and the Community as a Source of Care and Healing* that took place in three countries in Africa: Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire.

Rev. Ndanganeni Phaswana (South Africa), a participant of the International Dissemination Meeting of the Participatory Action Research on AIDS and the Community as a Source of Care and Healing (Kampala, September 1993) referred

members of Central Committee to a written report⁶ on the results of this research on AIDS. He went on to highlight the issues emerging from the research that need attention and action by the WCC and its member churches:

- analysis of factors that contribute to the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS as in gender analysis of AIDS projects as an important follow-up of the participatory action research;
- empowerment of communities to engage in developing projects that will generate income;
- advocacy on the global level to address the imbalance and injustice in the economic order;
- the need to know what is happening in the local context before making any judgment on people's behaviour and condemning them for using the condom;
- the need to look into the moral, ethical, and theological issues around certain church messages that cause further stigmatisation and exclusion of people living with HIV/AIDS and on the concept of sin and forgiveness; and
- participation in regular visitation, caring for and offering prayers and support to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Three witnesses presented their testimonies:

Ms Prakai Nontawasee described how the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) was responding to the problem. The CCT-AIDS programme began when local pastors encountered AIDS patients in their churches and communities, causing great concern. The AIDS programme was established to provide home-based care, AIDS education and counselling, and to prepare local congregations to respond to the challenge of HIV/AIDS with an open and caring attitude to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Rev. Margarete Rust-Riedel, a hospital chaplain in the Evangelical Church in Berlin Brandenburg, first heard about AIDS and met the first patients in 1984, not knowing that her husband was one of those living with HIV/AIDS. When she learned that he was HIV positive, the family decided to keep the information to themselves and among close friends because her husband was afraid of the reaction of those in the parish even though he had been a member of the church council for many years. She was also intimidated by the thought that people might be afraid of her husband or perhaps avoid him or even refuse to receive holy communion standing beside him. The brighter side was that her husband lived and died at home.

Another colleague had also been diagnosed HIV positive and he experienced a similar situation in his church. The first reactions were not sympathy nor sadness but fright. No-one asked: "Where did you find strength to go on?" The first reaction was: "How could you let this happen to you?" In times of distress for the sick and their loved ones it is essential for other people to support them. A church must be a safe place for both the healthy and the sick. Jesus Christ opened his arms to everyone who wanted to come to him and gave them the strength and hope they needed to carry on.

⁶ See Appendix V - documents available on request, nos. 2.2 and 2.3

Mr Steven Demello, a young man living with HIV/AIDS in the Sacred Heart Hospice in Johannesburg, gave a moving testimony as to why he volunteered to tell people that he has HIV/AIDS. By doing this, he said, "I can help some human beings." There are many problems and people are afraid to talk about them. You can infect others without knowing that you are carrying the virus. So many people cannot accept the situation and do not want to die alone. "I can do something for myself through living with it. I have come to accept it. The Roman Catholic Church provided me a good place to stay but nobody visits me. I feel lonely and am just waiting for the hour when God will call me."

In discussion, Deacon Jebejian, a youth adviser, expressed his concern that the AIDS pandemic has reached every aspect of life including the body of Christ. Many people in his church were refusing to take communion for fear of catching AIDS. He requested the WCC to investigate and publish the medical facts and implications of a community sharing from a common cup.

Mr Moglia, a youth adviser, challenged the WCC to talk about sex. We in the church must share and theologise and dialogue with young people, with the gay and lesbian communities, with cultures that embrace polygamy, and with the users of prostitutes. He suggested that a mandated group across the WCC units and member churches be formed to carry out this dialogue, because it is an issue that has to be faced openly.

Bishop Omodunbi challenged the statistics showing that eight million of the world's estimated 13 million AIDS cases are in sub-Saharan Africa, and wondered how these figures were arrived at. Was this not saying that every evil must have a black African origin? Archbishop Nshamihigo pointed out that people think the distribution and utilisation of condoms encourages immoral sexual activity. What should be the churches' position on this point?

Dr Larsson said her church could easily isolate itself from the problem - AIDS is seen as affecting people elsewhere. She had been impressed by the people of NW Tanzania for the straightforwardness of their information, not shying away from reality. We have a lot to learn about HIV/AIDS prevention. Regarding participatory action research, she felt it was not so much a question of widow inheritance as the fact that women are not supposed to refuse sexual invitations; formerly this did not result in AIDS. We must urge the church to stand on the side of women when they say No.

Bishop Talbert had come to the conclusion that he should tell young people who come to him for advice what the church's position is regarding sex, but he also needed to be able to walk alongside them and understand their struggles. If they felt unable to live up to the ideals of the church, he advised them to use the condom. We must go where people are and help them face the realities of life.

Dr Mogedal, concluding, challenged participants to be contextual, to listen, to learn, to care and to repent. We cannot live with a discrepancy between what

we say and how we act. Some glimmers of hope were to be found in examples of participatory methodology which help us at least to name the issues. She hoped the Units would be able to take these matters into their discussions and help the WCC to shape its role, to take us further as churches - to be more honest, more faithful, and to make the church safe for those with AIDS.

Bishop Boseto closed the session, expressing thanks to all who participated.

VII. YOUTH IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

Ms Priyanka Mendis, presiding, reminded participants that the Youth issue had been identified as an urgent one. While affirming the sources of hope they had found, the youth wanted to share some of their experiences from the EGGYS process, and to identify the challenges which the whole ecumenical movement is facing and which we must confront together.

"Marginalisation" was the theme chosen for this plenary by the young members of the WCC mandated Working Group on Youth and the Unit III Commission. Their choice was based on their perception that young people today live in a world of alienating economic, social and political pressures, including rapid change, economic disorder, wars and conflicts, and such death-dealing forces as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They are marginalised, treated as unimportant, worthless. Somehow young people have become "expendable". Too often, these pressures are also found in the churches and in the ecumenical movement.

The churches do offer a vision of hope in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the ecumenical movement offers a vision of unity, justice, peace and community. Yet both have failed to understand the world in which young people of today live. Small wonder that the majority of young people today do not feel at home in the churches. The question we are facing is whether and how - after more than two decades of neglect of young people and the laity in the ecumenical movement - we can recapture the interest of the present generation of youth.

"Where the ekklesia is discovered, the generations are united".

A presentation followed in which several young people took part - members of Central Committee, Youth Advisers, Stewards - giving a commentary on the slides being shown. The text embraced more than the images seen by the audience, developing the issues being presented in a dynamic and challenging form. The key focus was **today** rather than the past. Some of the main points in the presentation are included below:

- Not all those labelled "youth" share the same experiences and ideas: we encounter diversity, tensions, disagreements and intolerance, passed down through culture, religion and education. We struggle among ourselves to recognise our differences, share our experiences, and find common ground. In spite of sharing this diversity with the older generations, young people also experience marginalisation from life and community.

- The WCC has made important progress in addressing youth and their concerns. The restructuring helped us to realise our dream of youth work in every Unit and aspect of the WCC's work, while affirming a solid home base in Unit III - Justice, Peace and Creation. Youth participation has improved - World Youth Projects, Ecumenical Youth Action, inter-regional collaboration - offering thousands of young people a foretaste of ecumenical potential and challenging them to participate in renewing the movement.

- The WCC expressed its concern for young people in today's world through a collective process - the **Ecumenical Global Gathering of Youth and Students (EGGYS)** - in co-operation with other youth and student organisations. EGGYS sought to empower young people for reflection and action in an ambitious 5-year process involving issue-based working groups, national committees, regional gatherings, culminating in a Gathering of over 500 young people in July 1993 in Brazil.

- Of course there were varied opinions of the Gathering. But together:

"We...discovered that there is much that divides us. We disagreed on issues such as human sexuality, the interpretation of the Bible, different theological orientations, and cultural and personal prejudices."

"In spite of our differences, we found a bond through our common humanity and faith in Jesus Christ..."

"We return to the communities, churches and organisations that sent us... agonising because we have seen the fragility of relationships and our whole creation."

"We return committed to being seeds of hope and transformation...we are young people touched by the power of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Unity."

"We challenge our churches and partner organisations to take us seriously NOW..."

"We are the vision. We want to be the vision. Together let us be the vision!"

- Neat reports of meetings might be normal for the Central Committee. But with EGGYS, the youth discovered they shared the strengths and weaknesses both of their generation and of the ecumenical movement. Our responsibility - and your responsibility with us - is to keep alive the ideals that inspired EGGYS, as well as the engagement and the controversy. EGGYS showed us that in spite of the progress of recent years, we are still only at a beginning. We now have the opportunity to move ahead, realising the dream we put forward in 1991 - a renewed and transformed WCC again relevant to the *oikoumene*, with youth present in all parts of its work. This is a shared search for continuing renewal inspired by the Spirit that unites us.

- Alienated from God, youth find nothing but despair. In our churches, sadly, we are often incapable of bridging the gulf. And because of their isolation, young people are easily persuaded to join the battles of the powerful. Hope is a gift of God and flows into the community in a spirit of sharing that grows out of equal and just relationships. In our engagement among each other and towards God, we discover the essence of faith and hope. When youth have no more hope, then society and the church have failed.

- By the nature of its calling, the WCC must affirm the hopes of the youth. When we proclaim our faith in God, in the unity of the church, in the struggle for justice and

peace, there are endless sources of hope that we can affirm. The challenge we bring flows out of the alienation which we are living. A lukewarm ecumenical movement, swift to compromise, is incapable of bringing the good news to the youth in our churches. We know that community, shared responsibility, respect, equality and mutual partnership will see us through. The challenge is not to lose sight of these imperatives.

- Your greatest contribution to our search for hope is to join us in the radical transformation of the ecumenical movement. Let us triumph over the disunity that divides, put aside the isolation that disempowers, challenge our comfortable rationalisations and theological justifications that allow us to say "not yet" to the urgent need for credible ecumenical progress and achievement. Let us recognise God's call to us all to responsibility for the ecumenical vocation.

- Realising the ecumenical vocation is the most important thing we can do to restore hope in young people. Real action is needed - not more words. Together, in our common ecumenical community, we can smash the forces that bring hopelessness - disunity, isolation, oppression and inequality. We need you to join us as partners in the struggle to renew the ecumenical movement, our churches and our communities. We want to "be together" with all God's people for renewal, for achieving unity, for justice, for liberation, for real community, and for sustaining the fragile web of the life of our communities and our planet. These are some of the challenges we face together.

Ms Mendis concluded the presentation with a quotation she felt was a pointer towards the kind of relationship that should be developed between the young and the old within the WCC and elsewhere. The author is unknown: "*Child, give me your hand, so that I may walk in the light of your faith in me*". Let us not stretch our hand patronisingly to take the young where we would like to go. Rather, let us stretch out our hand, convinced we can learn from the marginalised, including today's young people. Then we will walk in mutual trust and a firm commitment to the future of the ecumenical movement. Because ultimately the cause is more profound than the individual, whether young or old.

The floor was opened for discussion. Ms Engel took up one of the challenges by noting that more young people were involved in this meeting of Central Committee than were present in the session, and suggested that next time, all stewards be given the possibility of hearing what goes on in plenary sessions. She was aware this meant that some tasks would need to be done by Central Committee members and she offered to help with organising this.

On the question of marginalisation, Dr Tveter felt that by talking about different groups, we were contributing to marginalisation by placing the centre elsewhere, whereas it was important for us to learn to see ourselves as the centre sometimes. The Church of Norway had recently held an assembly when youth were invited to present their concerns; many suggestions were made regarding youth participation, one of which was "Talk to youth, share with youth, listen to youth".

Mr Koumbarelis felt it was necessary to make a distinction between the causes of marginalisation and its effects. New problems are always worse than the old ones. We talk about working towards unity but must not forget that a stable unity can only be built on truth.

Dr Mandeng was concerned about the problems young people have inherited. Many of us have lived the past, together we are living the present, but the future belongs to the youth. He was concerned that the ecumenical movement is not sufficiently well known at national and local levels. No funds were available for educational needs in his region and he urged the WCC to organise ecumenical youth training programmes.

Bishop Gomez spoke about work he had been doing in a secular context in the Bahamas involving young people who felt marginalised because their elders did not take them seriously. Young people are searching for meaning and values in their lives, and we need to help them be aware of moral traditions by presenting a balanced approach. In the Caribbean people were victims of North American culture through the media, where immorality seems to be the norm. He urged the WCC to do its utmost to lift up the moral vision, helping young people look to the future.

Ms Seddoh said that as a teacher, the problems of young people were close to her heart. They are the adults of tomorrow; they are enthusiastic and strong and we must make use of their gifts in our churches. She urged Faith and Order to maintain contacts with the younger theologians in order to share their insights.

Dr Kässmann agreed with the need to challenge the member churches to see that young people are represented in their synods. Soon they would have to think about the young people whom they wished to propose as delegates to the Eighth Assembly in 1998 and as possible members of the next Central Committee. She noted that little had been reported in Germany about EGGYS and wondered what follow-up was planned. Ms Bösenberg said that the Youth Working Group was planning various programmes, and a number of activities had taken place resulting from initiatives taken since the Gathering.

Mr Lodberg believed that on social issues youth face the same questions all over the world. He appreciated the presentation, but noted that the issue of church unity did not play a central role and wondered whether young people no longer feel this is important. Was this really the case? Did young people believe the difficulties had been overcome sufficiently to allow us to go ahead as if the church was one? Ms Bösenberg responded that it was her personal opinion that, after nearly 50 years, we seem to be no closer to unity than before.

As a former steward and youth delegate, Dr Crow expressed thanks for the presentation, affirming the importance of their witness, not only as young people but as Christians. He hoped each would find a way of making a commitment to

the church, because there is little the WCC can do except through the churches by challenging them to act. He warned that the next generation after them would criticise them for not doing enough - but God would remember. He appealed to them to make up their own minds and not heed the words of "old" ecumenists.

Ms Walker-Smith stressed the important role played by youth movements such as SCM and WSCF in the early days of the World Council, and was excited about new possibilities emerging for young people in the ecumenical movement today. She was concerned about the feeling of marginalisation but affirmed that other groups are in solidarity with the youth; we must see ourselves as part of one fellowship. The role of young people in the WCC must not be reduced to tokenism but requires their real involvement, and the structures must enable their full participation.

Deacon Jebejian pointed out that the sacramental life of the church cannot fail, but we as human beings are susceptible to failure. He hoped we could find the causes and meet the challenges together. He urged that more ecumenical education programmes be planned for presentation to the Eighth Assembly in 1998.

Archbishop Keshishian had found this one of the most enriching sessions of Central Committee, which, together with those on women and on the laity, had opened new horizons, making us aware of crucial issues that must be on our agenda as WCC. In different ways the three sessions raised one question: the role and place of youth, women and the laity in the life and witness of the churches. It was not a matter of empowering one group over against another but of rediscovering the true nature of each, the holistic and integral nature of community. We must constantly question methods of living which have become categorised or polarised. Were we ready to take these issues back to our churches as a firm commitment for them to enter into?

VIII. TOWARDS THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

Dr Nababan, presiding, invited Rev. Nélida Ritchie to present the subject on behalf of the Executive Committee, which had given considerable attention to following up the Central Committee's discussions in August 1992.

Ms Ritchie said the Executive had appointed a small Reflection Group to study various questions that had emerged since Canberra about the nature and style of a WCC assembly, while remaining aware that there is a constitutional element that has to be respected. It had searched for models that would maintain a balance between the requirements and the expectations of delegates from the member churches.

Having received the report of this Group, the Executive wished to emphasise the importance of keeping three elements in a proper balance: theme, celebration, and the necessary business. The style would have to be a consequence of the requirements, which

would include the way seats are allocated to make it more participatory, as well as taking up the desire to involve the leadership of the assembly more actively.

The question of possible sites had been explored in detail taking a number of criteria into account; a decision should be made during the course of this meeting of Central Committee.

On the issue of elections (new Central Committee, presidents), the painful process at Canberra must not be repeated. Ways must be found to achieve greater transparency in dealing with these, perhaps through a wider participation in the regions beforehand.

Dr Konrad Raiser presented a paper on the Biblical and Theological Dimensions of Jubilee⁷. The choice of a theme is an exciting moment for any Central Committee, because it has the potential of serving as a focus for the Council and for the commitment of its member churches during the period leading up to an assembly. The theme would also be a witness responding to the signs of the times, so there are high expectations directed towards it.

The Reflection Group was conscious that the year 1998 had special significance, marking not only the 50th anniversary of the WCC but also the culmination of the Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women, and of the process of the Search for a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC; the commemoration in Africa and Asia of the 500th anniversary of the first voyage of Vasco de Gama; it would also be only two years before the end of the century and the beginning of the next millennium.

Several proposals had already been made to mark this occasion by an ecumenical act of unity. The Reflection Group was inspired by the recollection that our Constitution provides for seven years between assemblies, and $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$, precisely the formula for determining the Jubilee Year of Leviticus 25 - a year of release. So the idea of *Jubilee* arose, culminating in the assembly as an ecumenical year of jubilee.

Some background work had been done on the subject, and it was noted that in several contexts this biblical concept had been revived and applied in relation to the redistribution of land; a reinterpretation of the older mandate of the sabbath year, reinforcing the idea that after seven years debts should be cancelled. The jubilee concept adds that in the 50th year the original distribution of land is to be restored; all are meant to be equal shareholders of the land whose owner is God. Clearly this is a utopian notion and would raise false expectations, so that cannot be the focus of an assembly theme. We have no evidence that the Jewish people observed the jubilee as mandated in Leviticus 25. However, the jubilee idea lived on after the return from exile and was reinterpreted in the New Testament as a symbol for the coming of God's Kingdom. The early Church understood Pentecost as the re-enactment of the Jubilee concept: the outpouring of the

⁷ See Appendix V for documents available on request (no. 5.5).

Spirit is the evidence of the beginning of the new era, the new creation. Dr Raiser made four observations regarding this concept of Jubilee:

- it can be seen as a time under God's promise, a year of God's favour;
- a return to the covenant order of God, not a turning backward, rather a reorientation forwards which opens the way out of bondage into the household of life, a message of repentance and joy;
- a call to the re-ordering of the life of the churches for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation and for the restoration of communion; "the land is mine, saith the Lord"; a call to render the ecumenical movement back into the hands of God, from whence we have received it; cancelling the burdens of the past, the mutual condemnations that separate us;
- we cannot accept it without applying it to ourselves first of all. The Ecumenical Decade is a test case for the readiness of the church to respond to the call to restore communion in the household of God.

Concluding his remarks, Dr Raiser affirmed that we must approach the assembly with the hope of being able to re-articulate the ecumenical vision. Many times we have redefined our goal only to discover that it has vanished into a more distant future. The Executive's proposal for the theme was "*Now is the Time: Repent and Rejoice*" - but this would have to be refined and developed by the Central Committee. However, the sense of excitement and expectancy that caught the attention of the Reflection Group should not be lost. The Assembly could be a *kairos* for the ecumenical movement and for the life of the WCC, opening the way into the future and the 21st century.

Discussion on the Theme

Bishop Ambrosius did not think this wording reflected sufficiently the overall work of the Council, and proposed that the theme be developed around the concept of *koinonia*, which would provide proper perspectives for the new millennium. The biblical and theological perspectives call us not only to repent but to build a new community where justice and love will be realised.

Dr Supit thought that in view of the burning theological and social questions the world is facing, the WCC as ecumenical movement can be instrumental in changing people's attitudes by offering a prophetic sign to the world. For him it was obvious to accept jubilee as the main emphasis of the assembly, focusing on repentance and penitence, but also stressing celebration and glorifying God. The proposal as formulated was appropriate in his view, addressing both individual Christians and the member churches, and also the secularised world.

Bishop Bue admitted that he had been sceptical about the jubilee idea, fearing it might become superficial and result in propositions that would be impossible to implement. But after studying the documents he had changed his mind and supported the proposal with enthusiasm, as it offers interesting and helpful perspectives. The patristic tradition can help us avoid the trap of making the jubilee an occasion for superficial repentance; rather, it can help us go in depth

into the issue so that we can speak of true repentance. However, he suggested a different wording: "God speaks today, repent and rejoice", or "God calls us to repent and rejoice".

Bishop Muttiah was happy with the wording proposed which captured the impact of Christ's announcement: "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe in the Gospel!". He pointed to several other jubilees that would be celebrated in the next few years, including the independence of both India and Indonesia. He suggested that reference be made to the concept of "oclos" in Mark's gospel: meaning the people of the land as distinct from the people of God. Translated as "multitude", "crowd", it includes those who are outside the circle of the people of God because of the nature of their work.

Dr Müller-Stöver referred to what was being done in her church on the issue of repentance towards the Jewish people. In view of the Jewish tradition of a jubilee year, she urged that Christian-Jewish dialogue should play a role in the preparations for the assembly.

Bishop Anderson suggested another wording to include a justice aspect: "Now is the time: repent, reconcile, rejoice".

Dr Rusch, though acknowledging that it had potential, feared that the proposed theme would be open to misrepresentation in today's world. There was also a lack of emphasis in the background material on the unity of the church, although there was a mention of lifting condemnations ("anathemas"). But most of these were caused by bilateral relations and do not concern WCC member churches.

Metr. Kirill recalled that the theme of "rejoice" was considered prior to the 1983 Vancouver assembly but was not taken up. He questioned whether we had meanwhile achieved any of the ideals of the ecumenical movement and were in a better position to rejoice now than before? Secondly, the Cold War had given way to a worse situation as far as the violation of human rights was concerned: if he told his people that the WCC was calling people together to rejoice, they would not understand. Indeed we need to repent for what has happened in our world, and we must hope that we will find new models for the ecumenical movement to get us out of the present crisis. So this assembly should include the theme of *kairos* and hope, but it was not the time to talk of joy.

Dr Patelos supported the idea of jubilee, and the call to repentance was opportune. Three issues keep coming up which we never seem to discuss in depth: Faith and Order questions which relate to the whole work of the WCC; the question of North-South relationships; and faith itself, because we see a resurgence of paganism.

Ms Wilson, an observer, welcomed the proposal as courageous for it speaks not only to the Council and to the Christian world, but has millennial connotations.

She believed it spoke of costly grace and that the world was waiting for the church to risk itself in this way. But she wondered whether the WCC would be able to control the hope that this might inspire on the part of alienated people if they took seriously the invitation to come and participate at the table?

Dr Larsson referred to the Church of Sweden's recent jubilee celebrations, affirming that this theme does lend itself both to celebration and to taking up economic issues in relation to the church's stewardship that we are facing in today's world. A seminar about the Jubilee Year from women's perspectives showed the theme was an appropriate one for marking the end of the Decade.

Dr Tanner repeated the question posed during the plenary on Youth: Are we prepared to make the effort to be one Church? She hoped this would echo through the preparations as well as through the assembly itself. Secondly, in the Faith and Order presentation, the question was raised as to when the churches would receive into their life the convergences achieved in BEM. Could the assembly be a time to challenge the churches on the basis of those convergences, to make together a statement of faith? Thirdly, the proposed theme was a way of holding together both the unity of the church and the jubilee question.

Prof. Gerka wanted to see the theme developed in terms of reconciliation and thanks to God for his blessings thus far; those who have survived the Cold War have much to give thanks for. And it would be particularly fitting to speak of reconciliation in Eastern Europe and in an Orthodox context where the churches have lived through such a difficult period of history.

Ms Nontawasee felt that the theme of repentance and resurrection, having strong biblical roots, would help the churches in Asia to explain the World Council and its place in the world to a region where there is a resurgence of pentecostal and charismatic groups with little understanding of ecumenism.

Discussion on Nature and Style of the Assembly

Bishop Rogerson pointed out that the next assembly should be more modest in its functioning than Canberra was, especially in view of the present economic reality and the resulting curtailing of resources. Central Committee should be aware that many churches are being forced to reduce their contributions to the WCC. Regarding the theme, he referred to the prophet Hosea's concept of the people going back into the wilderness to be with God, hoping that he would do something marvellous - it is not just about repentance but about hope.

Ms Welch felt the first priority was to clarify the aim of the assembly and then ensure that this was carried through in organising it. How far is the WCC a body whose life continues independently of the member churches, and how far is it representative of and speaking for the member churches? Will the assembly deal with concerns coming from the churches? We also need to consider appropriate involvement of non-member churches, especially that of the RCC.

Dr Tveter noted that the APC would work on the nature and style of the assembly, but pointed out that *nature* and *style* were not the same thing. Secondly, she asked for discussion as to why the quota for youth participation had been increased from 20% to 25%, about which she had some doubts.

Ms Paulin was grateful that the Executive had taken up the concern that the procedures of an assembly be more accessible and participatory. She felt that this goal required creative plenary presentations, with balanced representation including the voices of women, lay persons and youth. She doubted that 50% participation by women could be achieved if heads of churches were appointed members of a church's delegation. Regarding theme, the concept of jubilee worked against exclusiveness - it is a celebration of inclusiveness.

Mr Mendez expressed his view that the assembly should maintain a balance between reflection and celebration, even if more emphasis is placed on celebration. Secondly, he supported the suggestion that a minimum of two delegates be allocated to all churches to guarantee the presence of church leaders who must be involved in the ecumenical movement, while offering the possibility for participation of women and youth as well.

Bishop Engelhardt stressed the importance of making jubilee a focus also for preparation in the churches. The request for the next assembly to be simpler than previously should affect the style. Regarding the assembly as a *kairos*, the year 1998 itself was already a *kairos* and he warned of the danger of there being too many *kairoi*, thus submerging the important one. Noting that there were so many suggestions for sub-themes he urged that these be carefully selected. Central Committee should not leave all the preparations to the APC but share in the coordination role.

Responding to some of the points made, Dr Raiser referred to the interdependence between the various aspects: in order to come to a responsible decision about the site, clarity was needed about the nature and size of the assembly; there was also an interdependence between theme and site. The document had omitted specifics of the exciting discussion on this interdependence between nature, style and size that took place in the Reflection Group and Executive - because neither felt they should prejudge the work of the APC. The APC would now have this task and pick up again the earlier rich discussion.

Some have expressed the desire to have a smaller, simpler assembly, but this would in the end defeat the purpose of an assembly and make it into a business-oriented synod-style meeting. An assembly is the point where the WCC regenerates itself and therefore we do need to preserve that quality that allows people not so far involved in the life of WCC to gain some experience and begin to make their contribution. Therefore an assembly of much less than 1000 delegates cannot really be envisaged, and this has implications for the logistical requirements.

Regarding a possible site, had there been a feasible invitation from Latin America, it would probably have been recommended but this regrettably was not the case. For the first time, interest was expressed or invitations received from three Orthodox member churches in Ethiopia, Cyprus and Romania. The Church of Cyprus had now invited Central Committee to meet there in 1996, while the invitation from Romania was retained till the last round of discussion in the Executive when it was recognised that, taking all criteria into account, there was a clear leaning towards Harare. Central Committee should be aware of the significance of the fact that for the first time we have been able to consider going to an Orthodox country.

The first invitation received was from Amsterdam, with the full support of all the Dutch member churches, linked in the NCC, which includes RC membership. This was very significant and should be honoured and recognised. Dr Raiser hoped that Central Committee would consider the choice of a site in the spirit of what is appropriate, what is the right message or symbol for the ecumenical movement as we approach 1998.

A second session, Archbishop Keshishian moderating, provided opportunity for further discussion on aspects of the Eighth Assembly.

Invitation to Amsterdam

At the request of Dr Blei, Rev. Willem van der Zee, General Secretary of the Netherlands Council of Churches, issued an official invitation to the Central Committee to hold the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam. Speaking on behalf of the Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic congregations of the Netherlands and all the groups and movements inspired by the WCC to struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, he said the presence of the WCC assembly would be a challenge and support for the city of Amsterdam, a symbol for a society that had become deeply secularised and where Christians were now a minority.

While wishing to avoid any spirit of competition, Mr van der Zee expressed the his hope that the Dutch churches would be able to receive the next assembly. However, should the choice fall otherwise, then they would joyfully go to Bucharest or Harare.

Invitation to Bucharest

Metr. Daniel of Moldavia said that one of the reasons the Romanian Orthodox Church wished to invite the World Council to hold its next assembly in Romania was to help bring about some improvement in inter-confessional relationships. Recalling that in 1948 an Orthodox conference condemned ecumenism because it was a fruit of capitalism, 50 years later the Orthodox wanted to affirm that ecumenism is a movement to bring Christians together. Most of the Orthodox Churches are in Eastern Europe, and an assembly would offer possibility for young people and lay persons from that region to participate in a WCC

assembly. Such an event would encourage all the churches in the area, which are still recovering from the effects of 40 years of communism.

Bishop Csiha felt it was not yet the right time to hold a WCC assembly in Romania. Regrettably, local ecumenical relationships were weak, and he had to inform Central Committee that neither the Hungarian-speaking nor the German-speaking Reformed Churches in the country were able to support such an invitation at the present time.

Invitation to Harare

Rev. José Chipenda, General Secretary of the AACC, welcomed members of Central Committee first of all to Africa, a continent in crisis but also in hope. We had all stood against apartheid, he said, and the fact that today we are meeting here in South Africa shows that what at one time was regarded as impossible has now become possible.

In welcoming members to South Africa, he anticipated welcoming the assembly to Harare which he felt had several advantages: Harare offers the best facilities available in Africa; it offers a community and fellowship among churches and national councils of Zimbabwe and other neighbouring countries, and both heaven and earth would be with you within the womb of African Christianity.

Discussion on proposed sites

Mr Zau Yaw pointed to the significance of this assembly, as an occasion to thank God for his guidance on the ecumenical journey thus far and to re-dedicate ourselves for the next stage of the journey God has planned for us. It would be a time to look back to the past, but also to look forward and plan for the future. He wanted to give preference to Amsterdam as the assembly site.

Dr Supit also supported Amsterdam. The industrial world was always seen as the centre of consumerism and a market economy as well as ecological destruction. It was also a centre of Christian missionary work, but had become a predominantly secularised society. He was convinced that the WCC should address the question of the destruction of life in the midst of an industrial society and be in solidarity with the struggle of the churches there.

Dr Turner said that at Amsterdam in 1948 a different group of churches were represented, mainly European and North American, and participants were overwhelmingly male. Today we are multi-cultural, multi-racial women and men participating in the life of the WCC. He therefore supported Harare.

Mr Lodberg felt it was time to have another assembly in Europe and urged that Amsterdam be selected. The full participation of the RCC would be assured through its membership in the NCC, and the theme is well placed in this modern secularised society. He stressed the need for the North to receive the witness of those from the South who would bring issues of peace, justice and

global reconciliation into a Europe that is becoming increasingly its own power bloc.

Dr Tsetsis believed that the 50th anniversary would not only help us renew our commitment to the ecumenical movement, but also to rediscover our sources and to realise that we are continuing work that started many decades ago. Solidarity with local churches, visibility and ecumenical impact in the host country were important arguments for the holding of an assembly, but the impact was not determined so much by the venue as by the agenda, the quality of work, and by a real commitment.

He went on to mention the question of finance. On previous occasions European churches had shared the costs by enabling delegates from other continents to attend. But with the serious ongoing economic crisis in Europe, he was not sure they would be able to cover the expenses of their own delegates.

Ms Gcabashe favoured Harare. Africa has been trying to make its voice heard, and as a global community we must be sensitive to the needs of our weaker brothers and sisters. Harare lends itself to hosting an assembly. The churches of Zimbabwe and of Africa support this invitation, for we also need to give our grassroots members an opportunity to experience an event like an assembly.

Ms Seddoh also spoke in favour of Harare which would give a dynamic also to the theme of jubilee, while Ms Oettel felt Amsterdam was the appropriate choice. Our specific task as churches would be to affirm that Jesus Christ died for the guilty as well as for those who are not guilty - this would help towards reconciliation, and give some hope to those who experience hopelessness.

Mr Jones pointed to the relationship between site and theme. He felt it important to choose somewhere different from that selected 50 years ago, as in so doing we are sending out a message about the proposed theme. How do we reconcile North and South in the light of the questions being raised? A meeting in Harare would force us to move away from symbolism and to face reality.

Dr Mandeng believed there was another criterion to bear in mind in choosing a site for an assembly: we talk about expressing *koinonia*, *diakonia*, practising the principles of ecumenism, but we do not often mention *kerygma* - witness. Surely we have an important opportunity for proclaiming the gospel in the place where we meet in assembly.

Allocation of Seats

Dr Love referred to the suggestion that each church might have a minimum of two delegates to the assembly, pointing out that the goals for percentages could result in a different series of imbalances. Constitutionally we cannot require that the churches appoint certain quotas; we can simply encourage them to do so. Her calculations showed that it would still be difficult to ensure the goal of 50%

women, and she had submitted a written proposal to the Committee on the General Secretariat asking that the proposal be expressed in more flexible terms.

Dr Page felt that if heads of churches wish to come as part of their delegations, that was fine, but she did not feel they should be targeted as a specific group. We have been celebrating the *laos*: is it not possible for them to recommit the churches for the future? If heads of churches were present, would they be treated in the same way as other delegates? She feared they might simply become an attraction for the media, and surely this was not the image the WCC or the churches would wish to give.

On the question of balances, Mr Farfan thought it was important to ensure that there was a balance between genders, and between lay and ordained. We need to find a mechanism to help the churches achieve these aims.

Election process

Ms Mapanao thought the proposals by the Executive were an improvement on the previous process, but she was concerned lest the process in the regions be dominated by a few persons, with the difficult experiences of Canberra being simply transferred to the regional gatherings. Clear guidelines would be essential for any proposed regional process.

Bishop Gerny pointed out that even within Central Committee there was a problem of minorities; it was important to ensure that small churches were also fairly and regularly represented in the membership of Central Committee, and this decision should be made within our community.

Dr Tsetsis believed the task of the Nominations Committee would be easier if every church provided a list of persons eligible for membership in Central Committee, representing the different categories. By giving more power to regional groups we might only multiply the problems experienced in the past.

Other assembly matters

Ms Bazett mentioned the need to ensure a balance between theme, celebration, and the deliberative aspects. Allowing more time for the latter would help to ensure ownership of the assembly by delegates. Secondly, she believed that the laity would play a more powerful role in the life of the churches in future, including electing the heads of churches. If they have more exposure to the ecumenical movement, they are more likely to elect persons who will carry that work forward.

Bishop Ambrosius requested a re-thinking of the size of the assembly. He was in favour of organising separate events which would allow the presence of heads of churches for the celebratory Jubilee occasion, but not necessarily for the business aspect. Regarding the style, the number of deliberative sessions should be reduced.

Dr Wilkens pointed out that the preparation work was as important as that related to the theme and the site. Financially, too, the churches need time to prepare themselves, so he hoped some decisions could already be taken at this present meeting. Regarding size, he asked whether it was really necessary to have almost 3,000 persons present in addition to the delegates, as at Canberra?

Taking up the financial aspect, Dr Turner wondered how additional costs could be covered if every church were to have two delegates and the capacity of the larger churches was less than in the past.

The Moderator expressed thanks to all who had participated in the discussions. The points made would be helpful as Central Committee embarks on the detailed process of assembly preparation.

The General Secretary explained that Unit Committees would have opportunity for further discussion on assembly-related matters; their comments should be shared with the Committee on the General Secretariat, which would then compile recommendations that, in the framework of its report, would be brought back to Central Committee for action. Decisions would have to be made in relation to the site and the theme, while other matters will be taken up in more detail by staff and then by the APC (see GS Committee Report, p.82 ff).

IX. NATIONAL COUNCILS OF CHURCHES - LOCAL ECUMENISM

Dr Aaron Tolen, moderating, invited Rev. Joan Campbell and Rev. Tso Man King to introduce the session with a series of slides accompanied by dialogue.

Dr Tolen went on to say that local ecumenism takes many forms: sharing in worship and prayer; shared reflection and bible study, shared witness to the good news of the Gospel, shared action within the community, shared response to crises at home or far away. Councils of churches bring together churches within a country in a commitment to church unity; many now include the Roman Catholic Church in their membership. Most councils reflect within their constituencies the Basis of the World Council of Churches and include in their structure some emphasis on the search for unity, as well as witness and service.

Rev. David Gill, General Secretary of the Australian Council of Churches, told participants that in July 1994 the ACC was to die for the sake of the ecumenical movement, 50 years after the initial moves which led to its formation in 1944. Born in its place will be the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA), with a new constitution, expanded membership, different priorities and a changed style of work.

Questions that led to this move included "Can we dream some new dreams? Can we envisage a way for Australia's churches to be together that will reflect more truly where the ecumenical movement finds us today? Can we conceive a set of relationships that will

better enable our churches to move forward on pilgrimage together in obedience to Christ?"

The ACC member churches set about the search for answers. Churches not part of the present council were invited to join in reconsidering together everything related to the structures, programmes, staffing, working styles. After talking, dreaming and praying together, they discovered that their thinking was built on three underlying convictions:

- the primary actors in the ecumenical movement are churches, not the structures they set up;
- any council of churches must be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the churches' ecumenical movement: a means to an end, not an end in itself;
- a council's primary task is to help its own member churches wrestle together with the question of what faithfulness to Christ requires of them, so that they may be the church in their particular place.

The new council in Australia will have two significantly new characteristics:

- it will be more explicitly owned by and responsive to its member churches; seeing itself as the churches acting together, rather than as a body parallel to or over against the churches;
- it will be an ecumenical body whose largest member is the Roman Catholic Church, and the majority of whose members are Orthodox churches - very different from the entirely Protestant body formed 50 years ago.

The implications for the council's priorities and style of work will be considerable. Among the many important tasks it will have to deal with are:

- to ensure its structures and decision-making procedures are genuinely representative of the member churches, in the sense that participants will be able to speak authoritatively for their churches, and that they will be a balanced blend of the churches' membership;
- to ensure space for indigenous members of our churches to be themselves and to make their own decisions, while remaining part of the NCCA and responsible through it to the member churches;
- to determine whether to seek membership of the CCA and an associate relationship with the WCC.

Mr Gill asked participants to pray for the churches of Australia - representing 87% of the country's Christians - as they enter into this new covenant to journey together in obedience to Christ.

Ms Lydia Chicwavaire, of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), asserted that member churches as well as non-members, and ecumenical church groups throughout Zimbabwe participate in the ZCC's programmes. She outlined some of the tasks the council is involved in, such as facilitating seminars and conferences to build people's awareness on issues which affect them.

People see the ZCC as their channel of communication both with the State and with the WCC, both as a mediating and as a liberating body. The ZCC has a participatory structure, with a number of departments dealing with specific issues, while the

programmes are basically decided on by the people themselves. As well as ecumenical human resource and leadership development, there are many educational programmes including community based development education for empowerment and participatory democracy, transformation education using popular education methods; health education. Courses in business management especially directed towards women and youth are attended by people from the wider region including Angola, Mozambique, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia.

Work around the Ecumenical Decade - Churches in Solidarity with Women, is an ongoing process in the churches of Zimbabwe; women church workers organise both church-related groups and members of the community at large. On human rights issues, the ZCC is also working with the Roman Catholics, and together with the Justice and Peace Commission they have taken on the role of protecting those who are most vulnerable, challenging policies which are not in line with people's rights. The ZCC enjoys wide recognition in the country as a whole as well as by the State because of the strong support it is seen to have from the churches and communities.

A number of programmes being carried out by the ZCC receive support from the WCC and ECLOF, especially in the field of women's work and youth work/education. Ms Chicwavaire expressed thanks to the WCC for its unfailing support for the people of Zimbabwe in their efforts to develop their own economic, social and legal structures following independence.

Rev. Noel Davies, General Secretary of Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN) indicated three elements to be kept in mind to focus discussion:

- 1) *The insights and concerns shared during the Third International Consultation for NCCs held in Hong Kong in February 1993⁸;*

A process of reflection within NCCs and their member churches has begun on the aims of NCCs, priorities and structures as "servants and advocates of unity" within the one ecumenical movement. Three other elements have to be kept in mind here, namely, the reflection on *Towards a Common Vision and Understanding of the WCC*, the joint Unit I/Unit III reflection *Costly Unity*, and the new RCC *Directory of the Principles and Norms for the Application of Ecumenism*. Did members of Central Committee welcomed this process of reflection? Were they ready to encourage such a process within their own NCC and churches? asked Mr Davies.

- 2) *Our experience, as WCC member churches, of the role of NCCs in fostering partnerships between churches and denominations, nationally and internationally, in collaboration with the WCC and REOs.*

How has the significant growth in the participation of the RCC in NCCs, and also in relationships with Evangelical, Pentecostal and Independent Churches, affected the self-

⁸ See Appendix V - documents available on request (no.6.3). See also account in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol.45, July 1993.

understanding and priorities of NCCs? Do they give new insights for our wider relationships within the ecumenical movement? Would Central Committee be prepared to encourage the JWG to reflect on the significance of this growing participation of the RCC within NCCs?

3) *In many countries there have been or soon will be significant changes in the self-understanding, purpose and structure of NCCs, often resulting in a broader membership and new ways of becoming a focus for the churches' search for unity in worship and witness.*

Regarding the relationship between NCCs and the WCC: both are constituted of member churches, and these must be the focus of all we do together. Since the crucial relationship is that between the member churches themselves, NCCs and the WCC are instruments which enable the member churches to work in partnership with one another at local, regional and global level.

Deeper reflection on what it means to be an associate council of the WCC is called for: it must have wider significance than the constitutional responsibilities as defined at present, and implications for the ways we work together nationally and internationally in the common task of enabling the unity and partnership of the churches.

In conclusion, Mr Davies encouraged reflection on the relationships developing between NCCs. They have become more conscious of their role within the ecumenical movement and appreciative of the mutual support they can offer one another.

Finally, it was noted that Guidelines on Relationships between the WCC and NCCs were in process and would be brought to Central Committee for approval in 1995.

Discussion

Bishop Boseto pointed out that the churches themselves should be the instrument for uniting the people of God in a particular locality. Even if some progress is made in uniting the churches, this will not necessarily mean that the people are united. Having led the recent team visit to Aboriginal Communities in Australia, he asked how place can be provided for Indigenous Peoples to be themselves and at the same time part of the churches?

Responding, Mr Gill said the issue of cultural identity was a major one in Australia. The culture with the moral claim is of course that of the Indigenous People, and the question is how to ensure space so that these cultures are respected and can bring their own gifts into the Australian family, while at the same time affirming the multicultural aspect of our life in Christ? The NCCA would certainly be taking up the subject.

Bishop Zacharias was encouraged that the RCC is a member of some 50 NCCs, and he stressed the importance of cooperation among the churches on local issues, especially in areas where Christians are in the minority. In India there is good cooperation on educational and social issues, although diaconal work is

often done separately. In India the RCC is not a member of the national council; more initiatives must be taken to ensure RCC membership in more NCCs.

Dr Blei spoke of the experience in the Netherlands where the NCC has included RCC membership since 1968, when it became a council in which the churches were engaged, ensuring that the ecumenical movement is a movement of churches and not something apart from them. But he wondered whether there was a false dilemma: while the ecumenical movement is a movement of the churches, is there not an ecclesial role for the councils themselves?

In response, Mr Davies recalled that much time had been given to the question of the ecclesiology of NCCs but it remained unresolved. Reflection begun in Hong Kong would enable member churches to reflect further on this issue.

Mr Lodberg pointed to the dilemma between local and international: in 1948 there were few NCCs and the WCC based itself on member churches - so it is built on denominational lines. If we change the base to councils instead of churches, then the councils would nominate persons to Central Committee and the assembly. He also saw a dilemma in the fact that a church can at present be a member of the WCC without being a member of its national council. His vision was of a World Council built on the local churches in a country, giving a broader representation and thus more credible in the search for unity.

Msgr Mutiso-Mbinda affirmed that the Roman Catholic Church encouraged local representation of its churches, and identified three emphases:

- commitment to the one ecumenical movement - cf. the RCC's presence and contribution at the NCCs world consultation in Hong Kong;
- commitment to the ongoing search for visible unity not only within the framework of Faith and Order but at local, national and regional levels through NCCs or similar bodies;
- conversations with those bodies that are important instruments in the search for the unity willed by God.

The RCC takes a particular interest where an NCC includes RC membership. After Vatican II, the Decree on Ecumenism and other documents advocated greater involvement in the ecumenical movement and, while supporting such collaboration, there was awareness of the impact this could cause. The involvement of the RC church in local organisations does not change or influence their life to a large extent, but it does bring some positive elements. NCCs create an important forum where member churches have opportunity for bilateral relationships and these can help deepen mutual understanding.

Dr Wilkens spoke of the important role played by the NCCs in former East and West Germany, noting that now both the NCCs and the churches are united. A programme to combat racism in Germany is being prepared in cooperation with the WCC and the PCR. He urged that the guidelines for relationships between NCCs and the WCC be further developed for study by the churches and NCCs

so that they can be accepted without too much delay. Mr Davies affirmed that it was envisaged to revise the guidelines in the light of comments made by the NCCs and the churches, and it was hoped they would be ready for approval by Central Committee at its next meeting.

Bishop Anderson wondered to what extent NCCs represented the churches. Was there sufficient presence of lay persons as distinct from heads of communions? Mr Gill replied that it was vital for councils to be more than a gathering of heads of churches: they must reflect the wholeness of the lives of the churches. A council must be able to speak for its churches. One of its roles is to help the churches speak in solidarity with the marginalised, and such solidarity comes out of the dynamics of churches being together before God. There is no perfect way of organising a council of churches, but there is always room for improvement.

PUBLIC ISSUES

The first presentation on Public Issues took place on 23 January, the Moderator, Archbishop Keshishian, presiding. He explained that the purpose of the session was to hear a first report from the Public Issues Committee (PIC), and to provide opportunity for Central Committee to comment on the drafts presented or to submit written proposals for amendment. Secondly, there would be a brief overview of actions taken on international affairs since the last meeting, with a chance for members to comment on or seek information about such actions and to exchange views on international affairs concerns of the churches.

A second session took place on 26 January, Dr Nababan presiding. It was decided to adopt two statements and a message and to receive a background paper.

Dr Tolen, moderator of the PIC, reported that the Committee had noted requests for information with respect to WCC action on Rwanda, Sudan and Central America, as well as on Haiti. Discussion on these and other areas of concern would take place in the Unit III Committee. A written proposal had come for a statement on the continuing war in former Yugoslavia, and a letter from Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church was shared with members for information; a decision about appropriate action would be made at a later stage.

The PIC submitted to Central Committee for a first reading and comment the draft of a background paper "Contemporary Challenges to Africa", with the proposal that this be commended to the member churches for study and appropriate action. Two draft statements were also submitted for consideration.

I. Global Warming and Climate Change

Dr Tolen presented the draft statement. In discussion, Bishop Boseto underlined the fact that the Pacific nations were urging others to be more responsible in

their conduct and to respond to their cry for concerted action to protect the environment.

Dr Rasmussen reminded the Committee that the reason the world had reached this predicament was because previous models of development had failed. Not only the North but also the South should be exploring new life styles in order to attain the "sustainable society" we speak about.

Dr Wilkens asked whether some mention could be included about the dumping of toxic waste, which is happening on a large scale while much of the world remains unaware of the fact. This would be a concrete issue on which churches could make representations to their governments.

Metr. Kirill found it a good text but feared it was too technical for the people in the churches. Humanity has exhausted many of its resources and is going through a crisis: should the church not call on people to repent and seek a new lifestyle which does not cause such destruction of the environment?

At a later session, the statement, as amended, was **adopted** as follows:

Global Warming and Climate Change: A Call to the Churches

The 1990 World Council of Churches Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul, Korea, called all churches to "combat the causes of destructive changes to the atmosphere which threaten to disrupt the Earth's climate, and create widespread suffering." The World Council of Churches reiterates this call because of the gravity of this threat and the relation of climate change to the unjust distribution of wealth, resources, and political power.

Human activity has reached the critical point of changing fundamentally the earth's atmosphere and conditions for life on the planet. The continuous and intensive use of fossil fuels has contributed to the greenhouse effect and is accelerating long-term global warming. Further, the protective mantle of ozone around the earth is being depleted due to the emission of destructive gases.

While further research is required, the scientific community agrees that action cannot be delayed. The reality of accelerated climate change is not just another sign of environmental disarray. The equilibrium of the earth's ecosystem is severely threatened through the increased use of fossil fuels with a corresponding rise in carbon dioxide emissions.

A general increase in the Earth's temperature is likely to result in a rise of sea levels, endangering the life of small island states and many heavily populated coastal regions. The communities and nations of the Pacific face

particular dangers. Floods in both the South and the North will probably become more intense; droughts and desertification are predicted to increase as climate zones change; and a rise in the severity and frequency of storms is also expected. Moreover, many areas most immediately vulnerable to such changes are already suffering from the inequities of the global economic system, and are unable to undertake major and costly preventive measures.

Although the consequences are global, the causes of this crisis have their origins in particular regions. In striving constantly for more production and consumption, the rich industrialised nations today are the major, although not the only, emitters of greenhouse gases. These activities are threatening God's creation, inflicting grave threats upon the rest of the world and even jeopardising their own future.

The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) agreed to a Framework Convention on Climate Change. But it is yet to be ratified, and it lacks specific timetables and clear strategies to implement its goals.

IN RESPONSE, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches:

- underscores that global warming and accelerated climate change are visible signs of the crisis experienced by civilisation today, and are rooted in the refusal to accept the boundaries of God's creation;
- recognises that a radical change can be effected only as a result of true repentance and changed life styles, whereby the rich abandon the false value orientations of ever increasing consumption;
- understands that the social and environmental degradation caused by accelerated climate change is sin against God and a violation of creation;
- declares that the atmosphere must be protected as an essential and invaluable common good for this and future generations.

THEREFORE, WE CALL ALL CHURCHES:

- to recognise the challenge to the life and witness of Christians that the crisis from accelerated climate change presents;
- to reinterpret Christian responsibility towards creation and to respond in faith and action to the peril in their own situation;
- to rediscover Christian teaching on lifestyles of sufficiency in personal lives and institutions;
- to work in partnership with all peoples of living faiths and traditions, and with governments and non-governmental organisations, in concrete actions to build sustainable societies.

Specifically, we call the churches of the North:

- to protect the atmosphere by reducing their use of energy from non-renewable sources;
- to limit the use of resources to those required for basic needs, sufficient income and consumption which is sustainable.

Likewise, we call the churches of the South:

- to work for new models of sustainable societies built upon economic equity and ecological stability;
- to promote the participation and empowerment of people in creating these new alternatives.

We call upon the international community:

- to ratify and implement the Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- to adopt specific timetables and strategies to dramatically reduce total Carbon dioxide emissions to achieve the objectives of the Framework Convention.

Finally, we draw the attention of churches and the international community to the recently completed WCC study paper, "Accelerated Climate Change: Sign of Peril, Test of Faith", as a comprehensive resource describing this crisis, exploring its theological implications, and proposing specific responses.

II. Statement on South Africa

Dr Tolen presented the first draft of a statement, and some amendments were proposed. At a later session a revised text was brought for consideration.

Although it was not appropriate for mention in the text of a public statement, Mr Gill hoped that members would in their hearts give thanks to the churches of South Africa, and remember our debt to our ecumenical predecessors - those who had the vision and courage to establish the Programme to Combat Racism and the Special Fund, those in our churches, staff and committee members, who stood firm even when the pressure was enormous. This proposal was warmly received by participants.

Ms Gcabashe thought there should indeed some expression of appreciation should be included in the text. However, Dr Nababan, moderating, ruled that this be mentioned in the minutes but not be included in the statement itself.

A number of amendments were discussed and agreed, and the statement was **adopted** as follows:

Statement on South Africa

South Africans are a singing people. We have not sung because we were happy. We have sung even when we cried. We have sung so as not to allow ourselves to be broken. We have sung to survive.

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting for the first time in South Africa, gives thanks to God that the light of hope has been

kept burning among the people of this land through the deep dark night of apartheid. We thank God that we have been able, at long last, to join with our Christian sisters and brothers here together in new songs of praise and thanksgiving, at the dawning of a new day.

Our hosts from the churches joined in the South African Council of Churches have said "thank you" through us to Christians and Churches in the most distant parts of the world. Thank you for having been constant in prayer for, and in solidarity with, the people of South Africa through decades of pain and struggle.

On behalf of the *oikoumene*, we say "thank you" many times over to our South African sisters and brothers. Thank you for teaching us to sing in a new way; for your example of unity when forces on all sides seek to divide; for your faith; for hope shared in hours of deep despair; for your young people who, across many generations, galvanised the country to change. We thank you especially for the theological clarity you have provided to the whole Church, which illuminated the truth that racism is a sin which is deeply rooted in the structures of nearly every society and that its theological justification is a heresy; for helping us to acknowledge our own complicity when our churches remained silent about the heresy of apartheid and the racism in our own countries, and when we acquiesced in the support many governments and businesses gave the apartheid regime.

South Africa today abounds in new hope, bought with the blood of martyrs. The names of some ring out wherever people struggle for justice throughout the world. Others we will never know by name, yet we are humbled and honoured by their sacrifice.

Today, former mortal enemies are seeking to construct a new, unified, non-racial society together. A revolution of momentous proportions is being achieved through skilful, innovative, peaceful negotiations all around the country, laying the foundations for a new, democratic South Africa.

However miraculous, such sweeping change does not yet constitute justice. The deep-seated economic and social problems created by apartheid's multi-layered, highly structured system of exploitation, oppression and social fragmentation are even more resistant to change than the formal political structures. So transformation is plagued by growing poverty, unemployment, social dislocation and homelessness. Judging from the experience of other African nations seeking to make the transition to democracy, the poor could be hurt even more by the practices and policies of institutions which administer the international financial and trade system. As it is, change comes far too slowly for the worst victims, especially for the youth and women, who are particular targets of violence, even within the apparent security of their own homes. They all fear that change will never reach all the way to

them. Frustration and anger grow, breeding revolt and acts of revenge.

At the other end of the spectrum, threats to the privileges of those who benefited from apartheid breed fear and hatred.

These contradictions, escalating crime and lawlessness, and politically motivated violence in Natal and the East Rand, all pose present dangers. They put great pressures on those negotiating for peaceful change. It is true that political violence has claimed a terrible toll in human life since 1990. But South Africa is not in a state of civil war, contrary to the impression often given both at home and abroad.

Terrible as it is, violence is only part of the present reality. South Africa is a land bubbling with new ideas and constructive initiatives arising from local levels. New ministries of reconciliation are being formed every day. Many people are being trained in methods of mediation and conflict resolution. Many people are monitoring violence. Free legal assistance groups are being created. Forums comprising a variety of organisations of civil society were created to work out proposals on particular aspects of the interim constitution as a contribution to building a non-racial, non-sexist South Africa. Local economic and social initiatives are building up community and providing skills training. Education for democracy programmes are at work and voter education workshops are being held around the country. Very many of these are the initiative of youth and of women, who are especially effective and well-organised. Gradually, a new culture of peace is taking shape to replace the culture of war and violence.

The recent experience of many other societies which were consumed by violent passions stemming from ancient, unresolved enmities before they could complete hopeful transitions to democracy shows that this shift of culture is essential. Through negotiation, enemies can find an alternative to conflict, but if its achievements are to be lasting, it must move on to reconciliation through the painful process of confession, repentance, forgiveness, and compromise. This is an integral part of the reconstruction of society.

Changes in the global political environment provided a catalyst for the process of liberation from apartheid. A healthy, peaceful and just global and regional context will remain essential as South Africa transits into the future. It has been fully integrated into the global economy for most of this century, and heavily dependent on foreign investments. Some see in the present change, with the relaxation of international economic and other sanctions it has allowed, an opportunity to reintegrate the South African economy into the "First World". But South Africa cannot ignore its immediate South African context. In a document on "Contemporary Challenges to Africa", which we are commending to the churches, we have explored that context more fully.

Recommendations: In light of these facts, and deeply committed to the future of South Africa, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Johannesburg, 20-28 January 1994:

1. **affirms** the right of all citizens of South Africa to participate in the forthcoming elections and urges that the necessary provisions be made;
2. **appeals** to those parties in South Africa who remain outside the framework of negotiation to risk moving forward together, to trust the good intentions of the negotiators, and by joining them, to make their own contributions to this process which offers the only present hope for peace and justice for all;
3. **urges** governments and international financial investment and trade institutions to support the Transitional Executive Council and the Parliament soon to be elected in their efforts to reconstruct society through the total reform of national structures of governance, and of the national economy, including the elimination of corruption;
4. **urges** governments to recognise that a strong civil society is essential to good governance and participatory democracy, and for this reason not to abandon their support for the non-governmental organisations which contributed greatly to change, and are now key instruments for the rebuilding of community at the most basic level of society;
5. **urges** those now preparing the transformation of South Africa, and those who will be given major new responsibility for governing this nation to commit themselves to ensuring women their rightful place of leadership at all levels and in all sectors of society;
6. **urges** the United Nations, other governments and international non-governmental organisations, including the churches, to respond to the invitation of the Transitional Executive Council and non-governmental bodies like the South African Council of Churches to send and help train sufficient monitors to ensure free and fair elections unhampered by violence on 27 April 1994;
7. **appeals** to the member churches of the World Council of Churches not to slacken in their prayers, moral or financial support for the South African Council of Churches and its member churches in this time when ecumenical witness presents new opportunities and challenges in which people look to their churches for leadership;
8. **appeals** to the international community and to the churches to recognise the heavy cost paid by the frontline states and neighbouring countries like Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, and to assist them in their recovery from the consequences of apartheid so that the hope for a new day may be realised throughout Southern Africa;
9. **urges** especially support for the present efforts of the churches of South Africa in education for democracy and voter education;
10. **calls upon** the South African Government at all levels, business, churches and other non-governmental organisations to strengthen the hand of the youth of South Africa through:

- the provision of equal educational opportunities at all levels, including compulsory primary and secondary education;
 - the establishment of clear goals for the eradication of illiteracy;
 - the strict implementation of child labour laws corresponding to international standards;
 - the elaboration of emergency youth employment schemes;
 - ensuring that youth are full participants in decisions which will shape the South Africa they will inherit; and
 - encouraging young peoples' innovative approaches to community building and reconciliation;
11. **calls upon** all the churches of South Africa:
- to assume their full responsibility for peace, reconciliation, unity and reconstruction of the society;
 - to recognise and give effective support to the women's organised efforts to create a violence-free society and to ensure within their own structures the values of a non-sexist society;
 - to persist in the search for a new moral community based on values and norms which recognise and promote the value of the human person, of community and of family in order that all may contribute to society; and
 - to seize the opportunity to construct a new, inclusive and vital ecumenical movement to confront the challenge to reconstruct and reconcile South Africa.
12. **calls on** Christians and churches here and around the world to be constant in prayer for persons who have been placed in responsible positions to oversee the period of transition, to prepare the forthcoming elections, and for those who will be elected to office, that they perform their functions in such a way as to cause future generations to honour them as the mothers and fathers of the new South Africa.

III. Presentation to the World Council of Churches

Ms Virginia Gcabashe, a member of the Executive Committee and moderator of the local planning committee for this meeting of Central Committee, took the floor. She spoke of the dark times through which the churches of South Africa had struggled, but in spite of repression and political violence they were strengthened by the knowledge that God was with them. From Cottesloe 1960 to Johannesburg 1994 the WCC had accompanied them on their pilgrimage, and she wanted to thank the international church for this support. It was a moving experience for her and her colleagues in South Africa to have this chance to host a meeting of the Central Committee. Although there had been some doubt as to whether all members would be able to come to South Africa, she had remained confident that God would answer the prayers of the churches.

On behalf of the planning committee, Ms Gcabashe presented an embroidered banner to remind the World Council of Churches of their South African friends.

Archbishop Keshishian received this gift with appreciation, thanking Ms Gcabashe on behalf of Central Committee. He saw it as symbolic yet concrete expression of their attachment to the WCC. This gift would remain a constant and living reminder to the Council to continue to express in tangible form its solidarity with the people and churches of South Africa as they open a new page in their history.

Dr Tolen, inspired by this presentation, and in the hope that he spoke for every African church and every African person, asked the World Council of Churches to accept his spontaneous vote of thanks that throughout the world there had been and continued to be such a commitment to the people and churches in South Africa, as well as to the various problems and situations experienced throughout the continent of Africa. His words were received with applause.

IV. Background document: Contemporary Challenges to Africa

A draft of this document was shared at the first session on Public Issues, and a number of suggestions were made for amendment.

Dr Larsson regretted that the overall picture given of Africa was one of gloom, and she feared that it may result in a growing feeling in many European countries that Africa is beyond reform. She urged that the paper also draw attention to the other face of Africa that demonstrates strength and creativity, perseverance and survival, such as we have experienced in South Africa.

At the later session, the Central Committee voted to **receive** the document "Contemporary Challenges to Africa" and to commend it to the member churches for study and appropriate action (see Appendix III).

V. Action regarding the Countries of Former Yugoslavia

In view of the continuing bitter conflict in countries of the former Yugoslavia, Bishop Krusche urged that a message be sent to the churches, encouraging them to maintain their witness for peace, to refrain from any action that may prolong the hostilities, and to exercise all possible influence on all parties in the search for a compromise solution. He feared the world was becoming accustomed to this conflict, which raised questions about all our efforts for peace in Europe. If we say nothing, we would not only betray the churches' witness to peace, but we would be seen as having forgotten or as ignoring the suffering of so many innocent victims.

Metr. Athanasios affirmed that the Ecumenical Patriarchate was trying to find ways of dealing with such concerns in a non-political way. It would appear that people have learned almost nothing from history. Dr Tsetsis felt it was time for the WCC to speak out clearly and condemn this senseless war, not only the three groups directly concerned but also those European nations which appear

to be encouraging a continuation of the conflict for economic and political reasons.

The Officers had received several requests to prepare a message to the churches in countries of the former Yugoslavia. A draft was brought to the session on 26 January which evoked considerable discussion.

Dr Kässmann felt that misunderstanding could arise with regard to a reference to sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro which implied that these were the reasons why food and medical supplies were not reaching the civilian population. This was not in fact the reason and she moved that the sentence on sanctions be deleted. Bishop Neill did not agree, pointing out that although medical supplies may be exempt from sanctions, medical supply firms were not prepared to deal with Serbia while sanctions remained so in fact sanctions were the cause.

Metr. Kirill added that the sanctions applied against Serbia and Montenegro did not resolve the major problem of arms supplies. Experience shows that the civilian population *is* suffering as a result of sanctions, while the military conflict is accelerating.

Dr Larsson proposed an amendment to the amendment: that only the second part of the sentence be deleted. The Central Committee voted by 47 to maintain the phrase in question, with 39 against and four abstentions.

Dr Love supported Dr Kässmann's amendment. The whole issue of sanctions was an explosive one and she did not consider it appropriate to mention it in a pastoral letter to the churches, especially since the Central Committee had not had opportunity to discuss the implications of sanctions in this case.

On behalf of the PIC, Ms Salter explained that Patriarch Pavle had called attention in his letter to the lack of food and medical supplies; from other sources we have learned that these supplies are not getting through, while arms are. This was why the PIC felt it important to include this concern in the letter.

Mr Fischer, General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches, informed Central Committee that the four member churches of CEC in former Yugoslavia had taken a strong stand and expressed their opposition to the government. On the question of sanctions they expected the ecumenical fellowship to support their demand for the removal of sanctions because of the enormous suffering they are causing.

The Central Committee **voted** to retain the sentence in question by 55 votes to 39, with 4 abstentions. Dr Kässmann's amendment was therefore lost.

With some further amendments, the following Message was **adopted**, with two votes against and two abstentions:

Message to the Churches in the Countries of Former Yugoslavia

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, 20-28 January 1994, expresses continuing deep concern for the tragic conflict which continues to claim so many lives and to wreak such destruction in many areas of the former Yugoslavia.

Our chief desire is not to seek to apportion blame in an increasingly complex struggle. We are aware that much of the reporting of the conflict lacks objectivity, and that violence and brutality are being committed on every side, Serb, Croat and Muslim. We know, too, that the sanctions applied only against Serbia and Montenegro, with the consequent desperate shortage of food and medical supplies, have caused widespread suffering to the civilian populations, whilst the flow of arms through the region continues unabated.

Rather than raising our voice in accusation, we make an urgent call for an end to the fighting, through peaceful negotiation. Even though the efforts of international negotiators have so far been largely fruitless, and there have been calls for armed intervention from several quarters, we do not believe that increasing military action is the way to true and lasting peace. The situation is too complex, and the aggressors too numerous, for simple solutions to be sought bringing military force to bear on one or another side.

What is vital is a universal desire for peace in the countries of former Yugoslavia, and in all countries involved in seeking solutions to the conflict. Every effort must be deployed, with imagination, determination and patience, for that peace to be attained and kept.

To this end we affirm the Statement from the Round Table of representatives of religious communities from the countries of former Yugoslavia, meeting in Pécs, Hungary in December 1993, convened by the Conference of European Churches, in cooperation with the WCC. The Pécs statement calls for the members of the churches and religious communities to promote reconciliation, cessation of hostilities and the healing of all hatred and revenge. We also condemn the manipulation of religious symbols and religious feelings for war aims, and call for the protection of the human rights of all, especially of religious, national and other minorities, and for the ending of all "ethnic cleansing".

We exhort our member churches and all Christians in the former Yugoslavia to remain faithful, in the name of Christ, to this call, and especially to resist every attempt to use religious sentiment and loyalty in the service of aggressive nationalism. We assure them of our continuing efforts, through humanitarian relief, moral and spiritual support and dialogue with the political negotiators, to bring succour to the suffering, strength to those under intolerable pressures, and an end to the war. Especially, we assure them of

our prayers at all times, that the conflicting parties may lay down their arms, that the peoples of the countries of former Yugoslavia may be reconciled, and that all may know peace with justice.

VI. Actions taken by the WCC since September 1992

Rev. Dwain Epps, of the International Affairs team, gave an overview of the statements and messages by the General Secretary in the period since the last meeting. He referred to the variety of forms of action available to the Council, described in a paper adopted by Central Committee in 1985 entitled *The Role of the WCC in International Affairs*. The capacity of the Council to effect change is limited, but the moral and ethical considerations that it brings may make a difference in world public opinion in specific situations.

The international affairs team was involved in many different situations around the world which do not attract public attention, or where such attention was specifically not sought. These include Azerbaijan and Armenia and the search for a resolution to the conflict in Ngorno-Karabagh; efforts to enable dialogue in negotiations in East Timor, the Philippines, Sri Lanka; and Central America in cooperation with CLAI and the LWF. Team visits had been made to several countries and regions in collaboration with the respective regional body or NCC.

Discussion

Mr Rakotomirainy said the fact that the changes in **Madagascar** had taken place without violence was due partly to the effective reconciling role played by the churches, but few people outside the country were aware of what they had achieved. Now that the FFKM was an associate council of the WCC he hoped this would help them become less isolated from Africa and the rest of the world.

He asked about the Council's stand in relation to the World Bank and the IMF. Madagascar, along with other African and third world countries, had signed agreements with the World Bank on structural adjustment programmes but its national economy had deteriorated rather than improved as a result. While the country has tremendous potential, the economic situation could jeopardise the struggle for effective change engaged in by the people. The government was therefore seeking new solutions through partnership with other bodies in order to raise people's standard of living, but the World Bank was threatening to freeze negotiations that had already begun. How could the WCC help churches like those in Madagascar in their witness in a context where economic difficulties are the major challenge?

Bishop Mutiah expressed appreciation for the General Secretary's letter to the **Sri Lankan** government regarding refugees. The churches were trying to bring the two sides together, so far without success, and meanwhile indiscriminate bombing was going on. He asked for the churches' prayers as those in Sri Lanka make further efforts towards a solution.

Archbishop Peers said that in Canada questions were frequently raised about the situation in **East Timor**, and he asked for some clear word that would help him to provide the necessary answers. One of the reasons for concern was that those who suffer most are Christians, but not members of the WCC.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Rev. Nélida Ritchie, moderating, invited Ms Virginia Gcabashe to present the report of the Committee on the General Secretariat (referred to below as GS Committee) of which she was Moderator. Action had already been taken on applications for membership (p.6-8) and the reports of the Moderator and the General Secretary (p.19). The Committee had considered a number of matters, and was bringing several recommendations for approval by Central Committee.

1. *Matters arising from the Activities Report*

Ms Gcabashe reported that the GS Committee:

- *affirmed* the need to maintain the practice of appointing youth advisers to participate in future Central Committee meetings to ensure the continued involvement of young people in its work;
- *urged* churches to respond to the document *A Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC* and *asked* staff to undertake further work so that by the Eighth Assembly a substantial statement on this matter could be accepted by the whole membership of the Council. The revised timetable for the process was *endorsed*, noting that it was planned to bring a preliminary report to the Central Committee in 1995, with the adoption of a full statement to take place within the framework of the Eighth Assembly;
- noting the long-standing concern to improve the relationships between the Council and its member churches, *commended* the Office on Church and Ecumenical Relations (OCER) for its success in deepening those relationships and developing a new capacity to relate to non-member churches;
- *welcomed* the Executive Committee's intention to undertake a review of the criteria for membership of the WCC and to explore the development of alternative mechanisms for churches to relate to the WCC.

2. *WCC/RCC Relations*

The GS Committee:

- *reaffirmed* that "relations and cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church remain of vital importance in the life and work of the WCC" (cf. Moderator's report), and *noted* with satisfaction various efforts to review, assess and strengthen this relationship (including meetings of the Officers with the leadership of the Pontifical Commission for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and with the WCC members of the Joint Working Group (JWG);

- *expressed* its appreciation for the plenary presentations on WCC/RCC, NCC/RCC and REO/RCC relations, and *welcomed* the distribution of the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*. It *noted* the voices that said that in some places, especially where the RCC is in a majority, ecumenical cooperation is still difficult and in need of attention;
- *shared* further information on the Document of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the RCC and the Orthodox Church (Balamand, Lebanon, June 1993) and *underlined* the fact that the significance of such a document could go beyond the bilateral relations as it could also serve the wider ecumenical movement;
- *observed* that the issues of proselytism, religious freedom, mission, evangelism and common witness have to be held together and not be studied separately by the JWG;
- *welcomed* the study project on "Ethical issues as potential sources of division" and *encouraged* the JWG to give special attention to this study process.

The GS Committee recommended, and the Central Committee **agreed**:

- to encourage the member churches to study and make use of the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism* in their own contexts, especially exploring the ways in which it challenges the relationship between the RCC and member churches in local situations;
- to request the JWG to find ways to discuss further the ecclesiological understanding and the vision of ecumenism found in the *Directory*;
- to ask the JWG to explore the possibility of addressing issues on its agenda at local and regional level, and of taking account of such existing studies for its work at the global level;
- to ask the OCER to explore ways to monitor analyses of new models of ecumenical cooperation that emerge at local, national and regional levels.

3. *Guidelines for Relationships between NCCs and the WCC*

The GS Committee noted that:

- the aim of the Guidelines was to provide a framework for the partnership between the WCC, REOs and NCCs in enabling their member churches to search together for unity within the one ecumenical movement;
- the current draft, agreed by the Third International Consultation for NCCs in Hong Kong (February 1993) was now being considered by NCCs and their member churches; some minor amendments to the text were commended;
- in the light of this consultative process and following discussion in the General Secretariat Committee a final draft would be circulated for approval by NCCs towards the end of 1994 and submitted for approval by Central Committee in September 1995.

4. *Eighth Assembly Matters*

A. Assembly Site

Ms Gcabashe said that the GS Committee, having received information concerning comparative costings, and having considered all other aspects of the issue, endorsed the Executive Committee's recommendation that the Eighth Assembly be held in Harare, Zimbabwe; it nevertheless recommended that the Central Committee be invited to vote by secret ballot on all three locations: Amsterdam, Bucharest and Harare.

The Central Committee **agreed** to this proposal. The result of the ballot indicated 70 votes in favour of Harare, 41 for Amsterdam, 6 for Bucharest.

The President and General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches were invited to come forward. On behalf of the Christians of Zimbabwe, the President, Rt Rev. Jonathan Siyachitema, accepted the challenge to host the WCC's Eighth Assembly. He thanked Central Committee for giving this opportunity to the people of Zimbabwe, and expressed confidence in his fellow Christians and in the government which he felt sure would provide the help and support necessary.

Mr van der Zee, General Secretary of the Netherlands Council of Churches, while expressing regret that Amsterdam had not been chosen this time, offered the good wishes of his colleagues to those in Zimbabwe who would have this responsibility.

The Moderator asked that the minutes record the appreciation of Central Committee to all the churches and councils which had offered their facilities to host the next WCC Assembly, and in particular for the invitations received from member churches in predominantly Orthodox countries.

B. Assembly Theme

The Committee had received comments on the Assembly theme from all four Units; it noted that *Jubilee* was not intended as the theme of the Assembly but rather as a background motif with rich potential. The theme itself should be simple and easy to comprehend; it could not possibly embrace all the meanings that committee members wished to introduce into it. The sub-themes by contrast offered opportunity for such concerns to be spelled out.

After considering many options and variations, Ms Gcabashe said the GS Committee had decided to propose: "**Now is the time: Repent in hope**", although some would have preferred "joy" in place of "hope". In respect to other languages, freedom should be allowed for a translation of the spirit of the theme over against a literal translation.

Dr Raiser reiterated that a wide range of expectations had been articulated regarding specific emphases that should be reflected in the theme, including justice, reconciliation, an expression of gratitude to God; repentance but also genuine recommitment; renewal

of our commitments to one another and to God. Some of these were potential sub-themes, but it was not possible for one phrase to reflect all these concepts. Some had felt the words "now is the time" was used too widely in non-biblical contexts, but he felt it was easily understood and was recognisable as biblical language. It was not an attempt to suggest a triumphalist claim for the WCC or the ecumenical movement; any moment can become the time of God's promise - that is the ground of our hope.

Ms Welch felt the theme would be broadened by the addition of "together" = ".. Repent *together* in hope", which would bring in an echo of *koinonia*. Secondly, we tend to use the word "repent" as individuals in a personal context, and she felt it was important to emphasise that we were not repenting on our own but were engaging together.

Dr Larsson had the impression that members were ready to accept *Jubilee* as the background motif, but did not think they were ready to finalise the wording of the theme. She suggested postponing a decision on the wording in order to give the APC and Central Committee more time to think afresh and reach a proposal that was acceptable to everyone. Bishop Bue also thought that, in view of the uncertainty prevailing, the Executive Committee might be asked to look at the wording again and bring a new proposal to Central Committee in 1995 for final decision.

Dr Turner suggested adding the word "live": ".. Repent, live in hope". This would place a commitment on individuals, and would bring in the aspect of justice. He urged that action be taken at this session. Fr Kishkovsky supported those who wanted more time to find the right wording. For the first part of the phrase he preferred "Now it is God's Time.."

Dr Supit preferred the original proposal and was ready to support that; he felt the present one was weaker and contained elements of contradiction since it did not convey the sense of urgency described in the Moderator's report.

Discussion continued into another session, with Dr Nababan moderating.

Bishop Zacharias also felt present proposal was weak as it did not sufficiently reflecting the ideas expressed; he suggested: "Now is the time, repent in hope and rejoice", or ".. restore and rejoice". But it would be preferable to have more time for reflection.

Bishop Muttiah thought the decision should be made immediately as it was important for the preparatory phase. Dr Tolen agreed, since 1995 was too late for preparations to begin. He liked the present proposal, since "hope" was extremely important for Africans, and he believed that if there was repentance, that would be a source of hope.

Bishop Krusche suggested the biblical phrase (from Ezekiel 18) "Turn and live!" which was the content of everything that had been said; he was ready to vote on this.

Ms Scoutas was concerned as to whether the proposed wording gave the kind of clear indication to our Christian community that God has a place.

Metr. Daniel urged that the content be biblical. Some say Christianity has lost its joy; we need to rediscover joy from the Holy Spirit, the joy of those who turn to God. Jesus Christ said "rejoice", and his presence is the very centre of the Bible so we must include that, bringing together the churches in koinonia. Joy is the basis and centre of koinonia.

Ms Bazett was not happy with the present formulation because it could draw wrong connotations. She suggested: "Today choose life, repent together in hope".

Ms Seddoh thought the discussion on hope brought a certain dynamic, and to add "together" showed we were learning what koinonia is. We must have some hope in the Spirit, since we are talking about an event in four years' time.

The Moderator noted two clear viewpoints: some were anxious to finalise the theme at this session, while others thought the decision should be postponed.

The General Secretary felt it would be preferable to decide on a wording in the course of this meeting, and suggested that a small group consider the various suggestions made in discussion and come back with a new proposal. However, if Central Committee was not ready to make a decision immediately, it might be possible to involve the APC and the Executive in finalising the language rather than waiting until Central Committee meets again in 1995. A final proposal could be circulated to members and if a clear majority were in agreement, then the wording of the theme could be duly publicised.

The Moderator repeated the options: to take action at this present session, to postpone the decision till 1995, or to name a small group to bring back another proposal before the end of this meeting.

Dr Love made a privileged motion: to defer this matter to a small group as suggested by the General Secretary. The Central Committee **voted in favour** of this motion, with 6 against and 2 abstentions.

Membership of the group was **agreed** as follows: Ms Ritchie, Bishop Jonson, Ms Gcabashe, Fr Kishkovsky, Bishop Krusche, and Dr Ariarajah (staff).

During the closing session, Ms Ritchie reported on behalf of the small group. Careful note had been taken of the suggestions made in the plenary discussion, as well as of others received in writing. It had not been easy to reach consensus even among themselves, partly because of the differing interpretations people have according to their different languages and cultures. They tried to be evocative rather than imperative, and sought a brief easily-remembered phrase. Their proposal was "**Turn to God - rejoice in hope**".

Once again this provoked a variety of responses. Some were prepared to support the proposal, while others felt it was not acceptable. Metropolitan Kirill believed it would evoke some misunderstanding among the churches because it addressed

the world rather than the churches. To give the impression that the churches in Russia have turned away from God would not be well received. Others saw it as addressing the people rather than the churches.

Other suggestions included: "God gives us hope - repent and rejoice"; "Now is the time to turn and to hope"; "Turn to God - rejoice and move forward"; "Turn to God - rejoice together in hope"; or "Return to God - rejoice in hope"; "Return to God in hope"; "Look to God.."; "Come O God - rejoice in hope".

Mr Gill wondered whether this might be adopted as a working title but that the APC be authorised to seek a more widely acceptable wording.

It was clear that some were enthusiastic while others were not. The Moderator proposed that the wording be finalised now, or be referred to the Executive Committee for final formulation; this would then be shared with members of Central Committee for approval. Dr Turner moved that the decision be made now, but this was defeated, with some abstentions.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of asking the Executive Committee, on the advice of the APC, to prepare a definitive proposal for the assembly theme, for subsequent confirmation by Central Committee by postal vote.

C. Election of Central Committee

Proposals for a revised election process for the membership of Central Committee had been considered by the Executive Committee. After studying possible changes in the present procedures, the Executive decided to propose an alternative method. It therefore recommended further consideration of the following process which would facilitate wider participation and greater transparency, and help to reduce the tensions and difficulties experienced in the past.

The central principle of this process was that the primary task of nominations be given to regional groups of delegates during the assembly. The main features can be outlined as follows:

- i. The member churches would be asked to identify names within their delegation of persons who in their opinion should be considered for nomination;
- ii. A provisional core Nominations Committee from among the delegates to the assembly, appointed by the Executive Committee well in advance of the assembly (pending confirmation at the assembly itself), would decide on a reasonable distribution of Central Committee seats among the regions, based on several accepted criteria such as the number of churches, Christian population, confessions represented, etc;
- iii. It would also decide the number of delegates in each category (men and women, ordained and lay, youth, confessions, etc.) that each region should name in order to reach the desired percentages in the new Central Committee;

- iv. It would determine a small number of seats that would not be allocated to the regions so that the Nominations Committee in its final work could redress any imbalances;
- v. Sessions would be planned during the assembly when the regional groups would meet and agree among themselves how to fill the quota of seats assigned to them. The names suggested by the churches would be shared with the regional groups;
- vi. Regions could use identical or different processes to prepare their lists. They might form their own nominations committee, or agree on an allocation based on nations, sub-regions, confessions, etc, or might proceed with secret ballot based on categories (cf. election of Executive Committee from among the membership of Central Committee). The emphasis would be on transparency, participation and quiet negotiation to arrive at an agreed regional list;
- vii. Orthodox delegates would also need to agree on the regional, gender and youth distribution of the seats allocated to them and coordinate with the regional processes;
- viii. The Nominations Committee would then have the responsibility of putting the list together and making adjustments and additions to complete the task. The work done in the regional groups should not need to be challenged by the Nominations Committee or the Assembly as a whole if the regions have done their work according to the criteria set for them;
- ix. An agreed list would then be presented to the Assembly for its approval;
- x. The pre-assembly regional preparatory meetings may be used to explain the process and to discuss the various options that may be used to arrive at the list of nominations at the assembly. Negotiations may already begin at these meetings and following them, before final action is taken at the regional meetings during the assembly.

Ms Gcabashe reported that the GS Committee had studied these proposals, and, believing that the matter required more thought, *recommended* that it be referred back to the staff and the Executive Committee for further exploration in the light of the discussion that took place in the GS Committee. This had focused on the following points:

- i. Eight regional processes could be more painful than one process within the Assembly;
- ii. The process proposed lost the valuable Canberra innovation of having a Nominations Committee which had a neutrality deriving from the fact that it was made up of those who were not themselves candidates for election to the new Central Committee;
- iii. There was a danger that the proposals would over-regionalise the Council: members do not sit on the Central Committee to represent their churches or their respective categories but the Assembly that had elected them. Regions were not equal; it was even questioned whether the WCC had the right regions;
- iv. The problem at Canberra was not wholly the process itself but the spirit in which different interest groups operated it;

- v. The WCC is a council of churches and therefore the involvement of member churches in the election process is very important.

The Central Committee **agreed** to this recommendation.

D. Seat Allocation

The Executive Committee had discussed some concerns expressed at the last meeting of Central Committee regarding procedures for the allocation of seats, such as the importance of a fully participatory assembly; the limitation that many churches may appoint only one delegate; the suggestion that heads of member churches be specifically invited to the assembly. It was felt that the participation of heads of member churches was desirable so that the churches would have the opportunity to appropriate together the "Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC" and also to engage in an act of recommitment to the ecumenical movement and to their membership in the WCC in its jubilee year.

After studying alternative proposals, the Executive Committee had recommended the following guidelines as the basis for *further research and consultation with member churches* on the allocation of seats at the Eighth Assembly (phrases in italics indicate amendments proposed by the GS Committee):

- i. The allocation of seats to member churches should reflect the realities of WCC membership (size, regions, confessions, diaspora membership, etc);
- ii. The heads of member churches should be *encouraged* to participate in the assembly as delegates of their churches;
- iii. In order to ensure an inclusive and balanced assembly the following goals should be established: women 50%; youth 25%; lay persons 50%, Orthodox 25%.
- iv. The total number of delegates (85% + 15%) should not significantly exceed 1000;
- v. *A minimum of two delegates for each member church is a goal, provided that this can be accomplished within the other established goals of representation for the assembly;*
- vi. The model used for Canberra for churches with significant membership in several countries and regions should (with suitable modifications) be used again;
- vii. All churches should seek to make their delegation inclusive and balanced.

The Executive Committee had also recommended that:

- a detailed plan for the allocation of seats be presented to the next meetings of the Executive and Central Committees;
- this plan also include procedures for appointment of the 15% category of delegates;
- the implications of the plan for national and regional representation and the financial implications be spelled out.

Mrs Gcabashe reported that the GS Committee had studied these recommended guidelines and proposed that they be approved as amended. The GS Committee had accepted the three recommendations by the Executive (above).

Archbishop Peers stressed the need for further research and consultation with the churches on the question of seat allocation, which he believed could only be resolved when all the implications of the choice were seen; these should be spelled out in detail. As the head of a church, he appreciated the positive idea behind the encouragement of the presence of heads of churches, but feared that the result might mean a negative effect on two other minority categories: female ordained and male lay persons. He thought the disadvantages would outweigh the advantages, but could not be sure until he saw how the whole process would work. In order to make a decision, it was important to be able to see what the community as a whole would look like. The assembly is a community called to work not only for itself but to be a sign and witness for the world; the world needs to see how a community lives and speaks and acts under the reign of God.

On the question of the percentage of youth at the assembly, there was some discussion as to whether the goal should be increased to 25% or whether it was more realistic to say 20%. Members of Central Committee voted by 54 votes to 45, with 4 abstentions, to raise the goal for youth to 25% as had been proposed by the Executive Committee.

The Central Committee **agreed** to the above recommendations as amended.

E. Nature and Style of the Assembly

The GS Committee noted that the Reflection Group and the Executive had given consideration to the style of a Jubilee assembly and its process; however, the Executive believed it was not advisable to anticipate further the work of the APC regarding the design and emphases of the assembly. The GS Committee therefore **proposed** that the Central Committee accept the recommendation by the Executive Committee, on the basis of its preliminary deliberations, that the APC be asked to bring a discussion paper to the next meeting of Central Committee, together with a timetable for assembly preparation.

The GS Committee noted the possible structure for an assembly (cf. Executive Minutes of September 1993 at Sigtuna, Sweden, p.32) namely:

Stage one: Preparation at local, national and regional levels (including preparation in member churches); a means to be found for this preparation to feed into the Reports of the Assembly.

Stage two: A "Market Place" to capitalise on the wealth of ecumenical experience present in the Assembly; those present should have opportunity to choose between a variety of different activities.

Stage three: Delegates on their own (including other appropriate representative categories), to undertake the necessary business of the Assembly. Some functions could take place in parallel:

- review of past work,
- public issues,
- future directions for the Council's work,
- elections of new Central Committee and Presidium,
- exposure to other Christian traditions.

(There would be other activities for non-delegates during this period).

Stage four: Visits to take the message to local churches followed by a call to celebrate Jubilee in a final service of commitment by those present to continue the search for the unity of the Church. This commitment would then be taken back to the member churches.

Dr Wilkens felt that for practical reasons it would be too late in September 1995 to decide on questions of size, budget, etc. If Central Committee was unable at this stage to accept the proposals by the Reflection Group, the Executive should be asked to take the necessary decisions on style, structure and size of the assembly at its next meeting. He therefore proposed an amendment: that the Executive Committee be requested to take decisions on practical matters related to the assembly, including the size, at its next meeting.

Fr Kishkovsky urged that care be taken to avoid the use of wording that may create difficulties of understanding for some traditions, such as "covenanting". An ecumenical term should be found that communicates the idea behind this.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of this amendment, and **agreed** to the proposal by the GS Committee on the nature and style of the assembly.

Ms Gcabashe asked that the following items be noted by Central Committee for information:

5. *By-Laws*

The GS Committee *endorsed* the proposals of the By-Laws Committee as they pertain to the Unit of the General Secretariat.

6. *Relations with Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches and African Instituted Churches*

The GS Committee:

- *welcomed* efforts made by the Office of Church and Ecumenical Relations (OCER) to improve relationships with these churches, and received with appreciation the report of the first consultation on this issue held in Quito, Ecuador, in November 1993;

- *affirmed* that the emphasis should be on building relationships and exploring forms of relating and belonging to the WCC other than formal membership, in order to respond to the desire of those who want to come closer to the ecumenical movement;
- *encouraged* the OCER to seek cooperation in this regard with WCC member churches as well as with NCCs and REOs, and to support and facilitate their efforts to improve relations with Evangelical, Pentecostal and African Instituted Churches in their local and regional situations.

7. *Office on Inter-Religious Relations (OIRR)*

Following a brief introduction highlighting the main orientations of the Office as exemplified in its activities report, members of the General Secretariat Committee expressed their appreciation and support for the work done. They underlined the significance of dealing, within the dialogue initiatives, with problems faced in religiously pluralist societies;

The Office was encouraged to move forward in its involvement in the area of human rights and minority rights, not only through dialogue efforts but also through collaboration with other concerned Units and programmes of the WCC. In this context, a number of national situations in Africa and Asia were mentioned and it was suggested that the WCC seek ways of expressing solidarity with those within these Christian communities who are victims of religious intolerance and human rights violations;

Emphasis was placed on the primacy of local and national inter-religious efforts, the OIRR being invited to share in and support such efforts.

8. *Mandated Working Groups*

The GS Committee received the reports of the Mandated Working Groups on Education, Women, and Youth, noted the work they were doing, and encouraged them to continue their work in the way suggested in their reports.

The Central Committee **received** the report of the Committee on the General Secretariat, and expressed thanks to members of the Committee and staff.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNIT I: UNITY AND RENEWAL

Rev. Nélide Ritchie, moderating, invited Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia to present the report of Unit I. In his introduction, the Metropolitan reminded Central Committee of the link between "unity" and "renewal". The principal aim of the Unit - and of the ecumenical movement - is the search for unity in faith and witness to God and to the world. But we cannot speak of ecclesial unity unless we have spiritual renewal, so our aim must be to achieve renewal in unity.

The four streams of Unit I denote the ways and means for bringing the churches into *koinonia*: Faith and Order seeks the *koinonia* of faith and practice - a communion of minds in the confession of the one faith; Ecumenical Theological Education seeks the *koinonia* of learning and teaching for the mission of the church in the world; Laity seeks the *koinonia* of the whole people of God (*Laos*) through concrete action; while Worship and Spirituality seeks *koinonia* in sacramental and liturgical celebration, but also spiritual liberty.

Metr. Daniel invited Dr William Rusch and Rev. Elizabeth Welch to present the Unit I Report. Dr Rusch began by noting that Unit I had been fortunate in being allocated plenary sessions to report on two events organised by the Unit.

The Unit I Committee had a fruitful series of meetings, looking at the work that had been done by the Unit since the last Central Committee as well as at plans for the future. Particular note was taken of the two major world conferences on Faith and Order and the World Laity Convention.

Appreciation was expressed for the vital contribution to worship brought to the WCC through this Unit, for the significant work of the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, and for the work done in the regions on Ecumenical Theological Education.

Time was taken to make comments on the Eighth Assembly, the by-laws of Bossey and Faith and Order, on HIV/AIDS, and on finance; these had been duly sent to the respective committees as requested.

The plenaries on the Laity and on Faith and Order had been well received and had influenced the subsequent debate about the Unit I programme.

1. *Ecclesial Unity - Faith and Order*

The Unit I Committee reviewed the results of the recent meeting of the Standing Commission and the plans for ongoing and new programmes within Faith and Order, especially in view of the implications of the World Conference at Santiago de Compostela. It noted that in connection with the theme of "Ecclesiology and Ethics", Faith and Order could make a contribution to the HIV/AIDS study in Unit II. The Unit Committee also affirmed the active involvement of younger theologians in all phases of the work of Faith and Order. This involvement should be secured in consultation with the churches.

The Unit I Committee:

- a) *affirmed* the Conspectus of Studies developed by the Faith and Order Standing Commission in January 1994 in the light of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order; in particular it affirmed the importance of the major study programme, *The Church as Koinonia: An Ecumenical Study*. This would provide a major input for the next WCC Assembly;

- b) having endorsed the proposal that a meeting of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission be held as soon as possible, the Committee *requested* that the Unit I Commission and the Finance Committee seek ways in which this might be financed and reinstate an annual allocation to the Plenary Commission Fund from the Unit I budget as soon as possible; further, if funds are available within the Council in 1994, the Unit Committee requested that the annual allocation of Sfr.90,000 be reinstated to Faith and Order;
- c) *commended* the joint study process initiated by Unit III and Unit I on ecclesiology and ethics, exploring the relationship between *koinonia* and justice, peace and the integrity of creation. These efforts should be continued and developed. Ways should be considered in which different traditions understand the relationship between ecclesiology and their ethics and how they express in their ecclesiologies binding and shaping approaches to ethical questions. This process should be directly linked to local experiences of the interconnectedness of faith and action and take into account the moral teachings of the ecclesial traditions together with the moral experience of the people of God today.

The mechanism for furthering this work should be a small team formed of representatives of Unit III and Unit I (including in particular representatives of Faith and Order) together with staff. The role of this team would be to clarify the agenda, to give guidance for one or more consultations in 1994, and to consider other steps which would follow. An interim report from this process should be given to the next meeting of Central Committee.

The Central Committee **endorsed** these recommendations.

2. *Lay Participation towards Inclusive Community*

Ms Welch noted that considerable discussion had taken place in the Unit Committee as to the definitions of *laos* and *laity* resulting from the Plenary on the Laos. It was felt that work needed to be done to clarify the terminology with regard to these two concepts; the question of laity had strong ecclesiological implications. Further work needed to be done on the general issue of lay movements and their relationship with the church.

The following new programmatic priorities were *affirmed* by the Unit Committee:

- a) that there be cooperation with other streams in Unit I and with all Units on developing the profile of laity as "the People of God as Inclusive Community";
- b) that Ecumenical Learning, Lay Participation and Formation would continue through the work of lay centres and movements (World Collaboration Committee) and through cooperation with ETE, the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, and all WCC Units. The need to explore

the possibility of a cross-WCC programme on ecumenical learning, laity formation and leadership in lay training was mentioned;

- c) that research would continue, together with Bossey, on Inclusive Community, with a particular focus on differently-abled people.

The Unit I Committee made the following recommendations with regard to staffing:

- a) that the stream coordinator should continue responsibilities for lay centres and movements, but an administrative staff person was also needed;
- b) that funds be sought in cooperation with the World Collaboration Committee for a consultant to work on "Understanding of Laity".

Referring to her work with lay centres in Canada, Ms Best stressed the importance of cooperation with lay centres, and urged that efforts be made to ensure the funding necessary to provide for adequate staffing.

The Central Committee **agreed** to these recommendations, and endorsed the programme priorities outlined above.

3. *Ecumenical Theological Education and Bossey*

Dr Rusch reported that the Unit Committee had reviewed a number of matters, including the process on the Viability of Ministerial Formation in today's World, Theological and Ministerial Formation programmes regarding Orthodox churches, and the report of the Bossey Review Group. The Unit Committee gave its general support to this material⁹, endorsing in particular the content of the Bossey Review Group's report.

The Unit I Committee:

- a) *received* the Final Report of the Bossey Review Group and *endorsed* the six primary elements of Bossey's annual programme (document 1.8.1). It *urged* the Bossey Board together with the Director and staff to set priorities from year to year among these six elements in order to keep the programme balanced and within financial and staff capacities;
- b) *endorsed* the Theological and Ministerial Formation Programme with the Orthodox churches (document A.3), and *requested* that this programme be evaluated after two years;
- c) *endorsed* the study on "The Viability of Ministerial Formation Today", including the proposed regional conferences and the world consultation in 1995 (document A.2), and *urged* that funds be found for this purpose.

The Central Committee **endorsed** these recommendations.

⁹ See Appendix V - List of Documents Available on Request. Those dealing with the issues mentioned here are Unit I Committee documents nos. A.2, A.3, and 1.8.1.

4. *Worship and Spirituality*

Ms Welch reported that the Unit I Committee had affirmed the new programmatic emphases, which include:

- the theological significance of ecumenical worship and spirituality (Faith and Order were taking this up in collaboration with the Worship and Spirituality stream);
- liturgical renewal through diverse expression (visual art, iconography, symbols, symbolic actions, music);
- music as an instrument of spirituality, theology and mission;
- worship and culture.

The Committee noted that an ecumenical consultation on Christian Spirituality for our Times was planned for April 1994; this would be preceded by the publication of the book entitled "*Ecumenical Pilgrims*".

The Unit I Committee *recommended* that:

- in view of the importance given by the WCC to worship and the need to affirm this as a priority, a permanent programme staff position be approved, with an administrative assistant, to coordinate the Worship and Spirituality stream.

The Central Committee **endorsed** this recommendation.

With regard to the reference to staff appointments, the General Secretary said that Central Committee had in principle approved a slight modification of the rules on staff appointments. In cases where the need had been established and where financial support was assured, appointments had been made. He understood that this recommendation had been passed to those responsible for ensuring that it could be implemented.

Bishop Gerny remarked that although it is said that our work and actions should be in harmony, he had the impression that only about half the members of Central Committee attend morning worship.

Dr Crow stressed the significance of the work on Worship and Spirituality, for it means the Council is reclaiming something that is alive in the churches. In this emphasis we engage the churches where they are. It is equally important to understand that spirituality is the only thing that will empower our prophetic witness.

Fr Bria explained that he had continued to be responsible for this stream alongside his work as Director of the Unit, but this task should not be transferred to the new Director. The reason for raising the matter here was that Rev. Terry MacArthur, the consultant who carried out the work of the stream, would be leaving the Council later in the year.

5. *Biblical theological reflection*

In response to the request by the Unit I Committee/Central Committee in September 1991, a cross-Unit staff working group on theological/biblical

reflection had been formed, located in Unit I, to coordinate and encourage "deeper understanding of the complementary nature of classical theological disciplines and approaches, and theology in context". An interim report from this group was **received** by the Unit Committee; a final report would come to the next meeting of Central Committee.

6. *Coordinating Groups on Women, Youth and Education*

The Unit I Committee noted the work done by the staff coordinating Groups on Women, Youth and Education and expressed appreciation for the emphasis given to Youth at this Central Committee and at the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order. It was felt that large demands were placed on the staff by these working groups, but the Committee was grateful for the work that had been achieved.

7. *Future pattern of work of the Unit Committee*

Ms Welch reported that the Unit I Committee expressed concern with regard to the lack of time for full discussion of the matters referred to it; members had therefore decided to spend some time in group work at the next meeting. Secondly, it was agreed to ask for more time in Unit Committees and less time in Central Committee plenary sessions, noting that the number of plenaries had increased since the last meeting of Central Committee.

8. *Retirement of Unit I Executive Director*

The Unit I Committee noted with warm appreciation the work that had been done for the WCC over many years by Professor Ion Bria, and in particular more recently as Unit I Executive Director. The Committee wished to place on record its gratitude to Father Bria for his untiring dedication to the service of the WCC and his able leadership of Unit I.

In discussion, Dr Tanner affirmed that coordinating groups were of special interest and importance to Unit I. She drew attention to the planned work on the *koinonia* with women and men, with the intention of beginning theological reflection for all women and men in the church.

Mr Abraham-Williams, attending his first Central Committee meeting, pleaded for a rediscovery of a sense of urgency and excitement: the work of Unit I undergirds that of all the Units, and a theological literacy was needed - lay and clergy whose training gives them respect for the spirituality of others as well as knowledge of the ecumenical story. He was alarmed at the lack of knowledge on the part of many seminarians in Britain about the goals of ecumenism, yet ecumenical spirituality was highly relevant today as more people seek an alternative to what they do not find in the churches. He quoted a reference to "inspired enthusiasm" in connection with the Faith and Order meeting at Santiago de Compostela, urging that more of this kind of enthusiasm be allowed to come to the surface.

Central Committee **received** the report of Unit I Committee with appreciation.

Ms Seddoh expressed thanks on behalf of the Unit and of the World Council of Churches as a whole to Prof. Ion Bria for his dedicated service to the Council, and wished him well on his retirement later in the year.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNIT II: CHURCHES IN MISSION: HEALTH, EDUCATION, WITNESS

Dr Nababan, moderating, invited Ms Marion Best, Moderator of the Unit II Committee, to present the report.

In her introduction, Ms Best said that the Unit Committee had received with appreciation the report of the Unit II Commission meeting held in Trinidad and Tobago in October/November 1993; a number of matters arising from it were being brought before the Central Committee for discussion or decision. Some items of information would also be reported to Central Committee as they relate to questions or concerns raised at its meeting in August 1992.

1. *Conference on World Mission and Evangelism*

Background

Central Committee at its meeting in August 1992 approved in principle the holding of the next Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in late 1996 or early 1997, "with a major focus on Gospel and Culture". The conference would give expression to the commitment of the ecumenical family to discern together the shape and content of God's mission in the twenty-first century, and to open itself to the renewal called for by this mission. The conference provides a means whereby the WCC supports the churches in their world wide missionary and evangelistic task. Further, it carries forward the CWME tradition within the constitutional provision that the Unit II Commission will convene the conference once between two assemblies, with the approval of the Central Committee. A full proposal for the conference submitted by the Commission was studied by the Unit Committee.

Conference focus and style

The Unit II Committee expressed satisfaction with the conference concept as a whole, with the way it would provide for a preparatory process of involvement of the churches and affiliated bodies and take its major inputs from the study process on Gospel and Cultures. It should be a working conference with a threefold approach: sharing of experiences, missiological/theological reflection, and discussion of future implications for mission.

Conference theme

Much of the discussion centred around the conference theme. A preliminary working title was given in the proposal: "Proclaiming Jesus Christ in a Broken World: Mission and Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century". The Unit Committee advised that the theme should better reflect the gospel and cultures focus, and also offer a trinitarian understanding of mission. Alternative working titles could be "Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a Diversity of Cultures" or "The Gospel of Jesus Christ in a Diverse

and Broken World". The Unit Commission with its Planning Committee was advised to arrive at a title very soon, in light of the need for giving the Conference an identity with the churches and constituency in the planning and preparation phase.

Time and venue

In light of the timing for the Eighth Assembly, it was advisable that the Mission Conference be held late in 1996 rather than in 1997 and that it last for a maximum of ten days.

The criteria for conference location were noted and endorsed: it should be in a context which in some way demonstrates cultural diversity, and should project a positive image of solidarity with people suffering under cultures of oppression.

The Unit II Commission was advised to consider carefully the possibility of Romania if the Assembly were to be located in Zimbabwe because of the missionary significance of the region. Other Unit Committee proposals were Birmingham (UK), Brazil or Chile. The Unit Commission would make the decision soon.

Participants

A maximum of 500 participants was proposed and endorsed, noting however that this was in fact smaller than desirable. This number would include delegates, consultants, delegated observers, advisers, staff and stewards (not counting visitors and press). Care should be taken to limit numbers to what was considered essential to achieve the conference purposes and meet the requirements of the constitution, and to ensure that the number of delegates over against other participants was kept in reasonable balance. The delegates should include a high proportion of those involved in gospel and cultures issues at the local level. An appropriate balance should also be found between those delegates who can pay their own way and those whose participation would require subsidising. While the preparatory process would involve a larger number of people it was neither possible nor appropriate that all who become involved in the preparatory process participate in the conference.

Budget

It was noted that the Finance Committee, in view of the needs of the Assembly, had voiced unease at the prospect of a special appeal for funding. The Unit was advised to mobilise resources from its fund balances.

A budget was submitted, with a total expenditure of Sfr 2,750,170. Income projection, including money from fund balances, amounted to Sfr 2,000,000. To meet the needs of the conference, an additional total of Sfr 750,000 was required. Out of this, income from self-payers was projected to be a maximum of Sfr 450,000, with Sfr 250,000 as a more realistic figure. It would be necessary to raise a minimum of Sfr 500,000, to be done by approaching Unit II-related agencies as well as other agencies and churches on a selective basis.

The Unit Committee *recommended* that Central Committee give its approval to convene the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism within the framework of the proposal submitted, with a maximum number of 500 participants and within an overall budget of Sfr 2,750,170. The Central Committee **agreed**.

2. *Study on Gospel and Cultures*

Ms Best reported that the Unit II Committee had noted with appreciation and interest the proposed study programme on Gospel and Cultures, as presented through the Unit Commission. The ecumenical study process seeks to understand the implications of a gospel that both challenges and is challenged by the cultures in which it finds itself, in order that the churches and individual Christians may live and witness authentically. The goal is to better equip the churches for mission and evangelism in the diverse cultural contexts of today.

The proposed study would include the following inter-related areas:

- a) Authentic witness within each culture;
- b) The life and witness of local congregations in pluralistic societies;
- c) The Gospel and the strengthening of identity in community;
- d) The relation between the one Gospel and diverse witnesses.

The study will require careful attention to how the terms "culture", "gospel" and "church" are understood and used in different contexts, and to ensure appropriate focusing of the study. The Unit II Committee stressed the need to make appropriate use of the theological understanding that has already been reached through the many years of ecumenical exploration of issues related to this theme. The relationship between the gospel, cultures, and the teaching and *artistic* worshipping tradition of the churches in many contexts should be given more attention, including how the gospel has been and is expressed in and through various churches.

An emphasis on local and contextual exploration would be essential to understanding how the gospel is received, experienced and proclaimed within the diversity of cultures, and how the proclamation of gospel interacts with cultures through critique, affirmation and transformation. Special attention should also be given to how the *false* proclamation of the gospel has crushed and marginalised people in many cultures.

The Unit Committee underlined the significance of the fact that the study process will feed into the World Mission Conference. It encouraged inter-unit cooperation in its development. Note was taken that the Planning Committee for the Conference will be informed of the study process and that the study process and preparatory activities for the World Mission Conference are interlinked. The Committee perceived avenues of active involvement by the churches through sharing of information, participation in the study process and through their own efforts in relating the Gospel and cultures in the period leading up to the Conference.

The Unit II Committee *recommended* that the Central Committee endorse the Gospel and Cultures study process as developed and approved by the Unit II Commission. Further, it requested Central Committee to invite the churches to explore afresh the relation between the Gospel and cultures in their context and to take part in the study on this relationship.

In discussion, some suggestions for revisions in wording were made (which have been incorporated in italics in the above text). Metr. Athanasios felt there should be some mention of the fact that through the arts different ways of expressing theology have been used in the Eastern and Western church traditions. Metr. Kirill pointed out that it was not the gospel that was marginalising people but the *false* proclamation of the gospel, and he asked that this be rephrased to avoid possible misunderstanding.

Mr Lodberg commented that some of the programmes proposed at the 1983 Vancouver Assembly were only now moving ahead - yet the world had changed since then. He urged that, should the Conference take place in Europe, it include reference to the relationship between national and confessional identity, church and state. Confessional identity is seen as keeping the social fabric together, but the consequence of that understanding is dividing those in the ecumenical scene in Europe: thus a major challenge is how to relate national culture and national identity.

Ms Langerak responded that one of the features of the study process was that churches could involve themselves in the discussion from their own particular reality and self-understanding. Those in situations where confessional and national identity were intertwined would be able to look carefully at their situation and see what it means for their self-understanding and Christian witness, and we would attempt to put these in dialogue with others. Secondly, churches everywhere were being invited to look at their own artistic work - ikons, paintings, sculpture, etc. - and to share them in the framework of this universal dialogue on gospel and cultures.

Ms Walker-Smith affirmed the importance of this study, especially looking towards the assembly and into the 21st century. She urged that within the Gospel and Cultures study the role of the laity be taken seriously, looking at the cultural dynamic of Christian witness in the work place; secondly the idea of promotion of culture, media and technology should be looked at - how it promotes cultural identity of the nations, communities etc. Theologically, the sociological critique should not be just of cultures but of the church as institution, looking at it as a sociological phenomenon.

Dr Tanner was grateful for the proposals and the reference to inter-unit cooperation. She would like to have seen reference to cooperation with Unit I because this study would have great relevance for Faith and Order's work on the apostolic faith.

The Central Committee **agreed** to the above recommendations.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie moderating, Ms Best continued her presentation of the Unit II Committee report.

3. *Theological Significance of Other Faiths*

The Unit II Committee *affirmed* the importance of the continuing study of the theological significance of other faiths and *recognised* that, in the development of this concern, fruitful collaboration was taking place with the Office for Inter-Religious Relations (OIRR).

4. *Mission and Evangelism in Unity*

The Unit II Committee supported the Commission's concern that the WCC reaffirm its central role in supporting churches in their evangelistic task. Further, it noted that the Commission discussed the issue of proselytism from a number of perspectives, and *recommended* that Unit II:

- a) collaborate with Unit I in a study on "Proselytism and Religious Freedom", in a wider framework of mission and evangelism, in response to the recommendation of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order. This study was to inform the work of the Joint Working Group (building on the Common Witness study) and should receive input also from the Conference of European Churches (CEC);
- b) establish a small task force to prepare a statement on proselytism, which
 - affirms the call of the churches to mission and evangelism that is faithful to the Gospel;
 - affirms the principles on which the WCC has reached agreement on the sharing of personnel and other resources among churches in partnership;
 - builds on the findings of a consultation in February 1993 set out in a paper "Towards Responsible Relations in Mission: Some reflections on Common Witness, Proselytism, and new forms of Sharing"¹⁰

The Unit Committee further *recommended* that the draft statement on proselytism be circulated widely for comment in preparation for submission to the Central Committee in 1995.

Bishop Serapion and Dr Tsetsis drew attention to the ongoing work on this subject being done by the Joint Working Group and urged that Unit II collaborate with the JWG as well as with Unit I (see also Report of GS Committee, p.81). Mr Fischer, General Secretary of CEC, asked that mention also be made of collaboration with REOs on this study. This has been part of CEC's involvement in the CSCE process, emphasising the importance of religious freedom and its inclusion in the Helsinki process.

The Central Committee agreed to these recommendations.

5. *Education for All God's People*

The Unit Committee *endorsed* the action of the Commission in affirming the direction of the Unit's education programme and its projections for 1994-95. In particular, the Committee recognised the importance of Christian education in multi-faith societies and Christian religious education in Central and Eastern Europe. With regard to the latter, the Unit Committee rejoiced to hear of the efforts at collaboration with the Conference of European Churches (CEC) as

¹⁰ See *International Review of Mission* - Vol.LXXXII, no.326, April 1993.

well as with Unit IV in the programme for training Christian religious educators and preparing resource materials.

The Unit Committee also *affirmed* the importance of the Family Education programme at a time of global social upheaval when family patterns were changing significantly. The Committee *endorsed* the recommendation of the Commission that the Unit set up a small study group to determine the future directions and staffing for the Family Education programme.

6. *Mandated Working Group on Education*

The Unit Committee *received* the report of the mandated Working Group on Education and affirmed its vision statement, policy guidelines and review and evaluation process. The report was affirmed by the other Unit Committees also. The Unit II Committee *urged* the Units to act especially on the review and evaluation process contained in the report in view of its potential for making the Council's educational work more cohesive and effective.

7. *Community and Justice / Urban Rural Mission*

As promised at the August 1992 Central Committee meeting, a consultation was called in December 1992 "to review the URM programme in the light of Unit II's mandate and missiological focus." The Unit Committee *endorsed* the "Common Understandings of the Practice of Discipline" agreed to by the URM Working Group and endorsed by the Unit II Commission. These understandings include globalisation, accountability, leadership development, training, inclusiveness, participation, transparency, nurturing prophetic relationships with churches and nurturing relationships with people of other faiths.

Responding to a question about the meaning of "prophetic relationships", Dr Mac Charles Jones, moderator of the URM Working Group, said that, in talking about "prophetic", we are challenging the church in the understanding of its own mission and bringing other perspectives of what mission is about. Ms Best saw URM as calling the attention of the churches to issues which they may not be aware of or to which they are not paying sufficient attention.

8. *CMC - Churches' Action for Health*

The Unit II Committee reviewed and *endorsed* the ongoing programmatic work of CMC - Churches' Action for Health, through its five main programmes:

- Capacity-building for Primary Health Care;
- Equipping the churches to meet the challenge of HIV/AIDS;
- Coordination of church-related health services;
- Health publications; and
- Pharmaceutical programmes.

The Unit Committee also *endorsed* the new challenges/issues being taken up by CMC: ethical challenges related to health and healing; health-related

activities in Eastern and Central Europe; traditional medicine; population; human sexuality; publications; and sustainability of health services.

9. ***HIV/AIDS***

All Unit Committees and the Committee on the General Secretariat discussed the emerging challenges of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in human communities and their implication for the ongoing work of the WCC. Unit II Committee *received* all these reports and noted the following suggestions for study in the Council:

- Theological and Ethical Dimension of HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS has raised theological and ethical questions and issues that need to be studied in relation to how the pandemic affects the human community particularly in the area of sexuality, koinonia and the concept of sin and forgiveness and the human being as the image of God. Equally, work needs to be done in presenting the Christian message for hope of everlasting life to comfort the dying and the bereaved and in making our churches "safe places" for people living with HIV/AIDS.

The discussions that took place in the various Unit Committees revealed that this was not an easy task for the churches as they were confronted by difficult ethical dilemmas brought about by HIV/AIDS, such as the issue of condom use, pre-marital HIV testing, the Christian value of marriage, human sexuality including homosexuality, gender equality, the integration of people living with HIV/AIDS in the life of the church. The churches need to be helped in making ethical choices in a thoughtful and sensitive way in the light of the gospel in today's world.

- Justice and Human Rights Issues in HIV/AIDS

In situations of poverty, health care and social welfare are neglected and make the people vulnerable to infectious but preventable diseases. The HIV/ AIDS pandemic expands and increasingly intensifies in areas where poverty and limited choices are inter-related. Those most affected are young women and children, drug addicts, recipients of tainted blood through transfusion, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to be a particular concern among gay and lesbian persons. People who live in dire poverty are vulnerable to being drawn into prostitution as an option for survival, making them more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

The WCC and its member churches are urged to advocate for justice in health, to assist in the empowerment of women, the improvement of the economic life of people, conduct outreach work among prostitutes, undertake gender analysis of AIDS projects and give care to people living with HIV/AIDS. The churches are asked to be in conversation with those who are affected by this pandemic.

The Unit II Committee therefore *recommended* that the Unit Commission form a Consultative Group on AIDS to study all the issues and questions presented by the Unit Committees and to report on the study at the 1996 meeting of the Central Committee.

It further *recommended* the formation of a WCC inter-unit staff working group on AIDS to address the various challenges of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Metr. Athanasios thought it would be helpful if there could be a report also by medical specialists dealing with the reasons for some of the difficult problems involved in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Ms Best responded that the group mentioned in the recommendation would include specialists who can make a contribution to such a study.

Dr Westra wondered whether it would be better to form a group on human sexuality rather than on HIV/AIDS, even if it were limited to the latter issue? Ms Best responded that reference to human sexuality would have to be included since AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease. But for the time being the study is not intended to be as wide as one on human sexuality would have to be.

Ms Langerak recalled the Family Education Programme's study on Human Sexuality published a few years ago, though at that stage there had been only brief reference to HIV/AIDS. Now this had come to the fore and we were focusing on it but within the wider framework of human sexuality.

A number of suggestions were made and accepted for changes in the text. There was some concern at the apparent singling out of homosexuals, whereas drug addicts and haemophiliacs are equally affected.

A reference to the use of the common communion cup was deleted at the request of some Orthodox participants: Metr. Kirill expressed particular concern about this, saying that it was impossible to refuse the communion cup to communicants in his Church.

Bishop Serapion welcomed the setting up of a staff working group and drew attention to the importance of close cooperation with Unit IV, with its involvement in a number of health-related projects and programmes. Mr Rakotonirainy mentioned that research and other work has been done in some of the churches that could be made available for the study. Ms Best said that the study group would indeed draw on such material that is already accessible.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of these recommendations.

10. *Name of the Unit*

Ms Best indicated that both staff and Commission members had expressed discomfort with the name given to Unit II by Central Committee in August 1992. "Life, Education and Mission" gave a different perspective from that envisaged by Commissioners when "Life and Mission" was originally proposed, and was not well balanced in that it mixed programmatic thrusts with overarching concepts. Introducing one programmatic focus meant that others were left out; nor did the name do justice to the vision, mandate and thrust of the Unit.

Accepting the need for giving visibility to education, and at the same time transmitting the identity of the whole Unit in a way that is easily understood by the constituency, an alternative name was proposed by the Commission and endorsed unanimously by the Unit Committee:

"Churches in Mission: Health, Education, Witness"

The Central Committee **agreed** to this new title for Unit II.

Concluding her report, Ms Best said that the Unit II Committee had expressed appreciation for the work of staff, making special recognition of the new Executive Director, Rev. Ana Langerak, who took office in July 1993. The participation of the Co-moderators of the Unit II Commission in this meeting was valued as an important link between Committee and Commission.

The Central Committee **received** the report of the Unit II Committee with appreciation.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNIT III:
JUSTICE, PEACE AND CREATION**

Dr Nababan, moderating, invited Dr Margot Kässmann, moderator of Unit III Committee, to present the report.

In her introduction, Dr Kässmann said that the Unit Committee had received the report of the Executive Director highlighting the programmatic thrusts of the Unit, and recognised with appreciation the progress made in integrating the work of the Unit.

The Unit III Committee noted the follow-up to the Minute on Africa (Minutes of Executive Committee, March 1993, p.43-44), and in particular that:

- the findings of the Windhoek Consultation provide the basis for the formulation of a comprehensive programme on Africa;
- a consultation would shortly take place between WCC and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) with a view to reaching common understanding of the content of the programme and the methodology of its implementation;
- a progress report on concrete action taken would be presented to the next Executive Committee meeting.

The Unit Committee received and discussed the Report of the Unit III Commission meeting in Cyprus, October 1993, approving its major thrusts. Substantial work had been accomplished in linking programmes, delineating priorities, and integrating styles of work among staff.

1. *Theology of Life: Justice, Peace, Creation*

The programme "*Theology of Life: Justice, Peace, Creation*" was a structured way to articulate the theological foundation and integration of justice, peace, creation and to enrich and renew ecumenical social ethics and social thought. Three outputs were envisaged: ecumenical affirmations of faith and ethics, collection of ecumenical worship materials, and a contribution to an ecumenical methodology which takes account of diversity and pluriformity and promotes dialogue, mutual exchange and common action. The Committee noted that the programme would involve reflection to strengthen action for justice, peace and integrity of creation; it would also involve discussions on the nature of the theology of life itself and ethics in relationship to the issues of life and survival in the world today. This programme was expected to result in a major contribution to the Eighth Assembly.

The Unit III Committee *recommended* that Central Committee approve this programme and urge its implementation.

In response to a question by Prof. Romanides as to what was meant by "theology of life", Dr Rasmussen, co-moderator of the Unit III Commission, explained that the phrase by itself meant to give theological expression to all life in, with and before God as God of life. Thus it was utterly inclusive. In this context however the reference was more specific - "theology of life: justice, peace, creation" - issues that make up the JPIC stream. Each has a particular point of view and in that sense expresses a particular tradition - historical or cultural reality. He felt the best thing would be to ask staff to give further thought to this difficult issue.

Ms Walker-Smith was pleased to note the link between Units I and III in connection with the "*Costly Unity*" study, but wondered to what extent the different processes of biblical and theological reflection taking place in all Units were related to each other; how could we move towards some interlinking of our joint concerns relative to the programmes of our Units? Dr Kässmann responded that Unit III was trying to be more in dialogue with the other Units, and one of the Committee's recommendations had been prepared jointly by Units III and IV.

Dr Page asked to what extent non-human life would be involved here. The outputs envisaged were anthropocentric, apparently only to be considered at a later stage. We could become so concerned about human concerns that we marginalise the value of non-human life. Dr Rasmussen admitted this was not mentioned specifically but said that it would be taken up in relation to the Canberra call for a fuller theology of creation, and in follow-up to UNCED.

The General Secretary underlined the significance of this proposal, in view of the fact that Unit III had the most difficult task of bringing together several rather different component parts and integrating them into one Unit. It had found a common focus here, articulated in terms of a theological ethical study project with an interesting methodology. He hoped this would serve to challenge other Units to move in the

direction of developing a common understanding around a particular issue; this would also help to make the interlinking of the four Units more fruitful.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of the above recommendation.

2. *Ecclesiology and Ethics*

The Unit Committee noted the report and recommendations on "*Costly Unity*" from the consultation on Koinonia and Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation held in February 1993, jointly sponsored by Units I and III. The Unit Committee commended this joint study process and *recommended* the following:

- a) that this joint study process be continued and developed further, and that ways be considered to evaluate how different Christian traditions understand the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics. This process should be directly linked to concrete local examples of how faith and action inter-relate;
- b) the mechanism for furthering this work should be a small team formed from representatives of Units I and III (including in particular representatives of Faith and Order) together with staff. The role of this team would be to clarify the agenda, to give guidance for one or more consultations in 1994, and to consider other steps to be followed, including the working out of guidelines.
- c) an interim report from this process should be given to the next meeting of the Central Committee in 1995; further results would be expected prior to the Eighth Assembly.

Prof. Romanides said that the theology of the Ecumenical Councils of the Orthodox world should be understood as a manifestation of the churches' identity, and of the relationship between theology and ethics. Ecclesiology and ethical implications were debated already in those early days.

Dr Kässmann pointed out that this would be a working team, setting out guidelines for a series of consultations, in support of the long history of the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements which must be held together in dialogue. It should include the whole of Unit I, not just Faith and Order.

The Central Committee **agreed** to these recommendations.

3. *Accelerated Climate Change*

Members of the Unit III Committee considered a document on "*Accelerated Climate Change: Sign of Peril, Test of Faith*"; it *recommended* that:

- a) the study paper be sent to member churches and councils of churches with an accompanying letter and guidelines for its use, emphasising the need for action by the churches;

- b) churches and councils of churches be requested to react to the study paper, not later than the end of 1995. Responses will be evaluated by staff and reported to the Unit III Commission in 1996;
- c) the WCC encourage and support the efforts of local churches to cooperate with NGO groups and others in addressing these issues in their local areas;
- d) consistent ecological criteria and practices be fully integrated into the style and operation of future international ecumenical meetings, and the Eighth Assembly in particular;
- e) the urgent global ecological threats find a clear point of expression in the development of the theme and sub-themes of the Eighth Assembly.

Bishop Mutiah referred to the development in some countries of an "ecological audit", and suggested that this could be a useful tool for Unit III.

The Central Committee **agreed** to these recommendations.

4. *Population and Development*

Dr Kässmann noted that a UN International Conference on Population and Development would be held in Cairo in September 1994. Since the 1974 UN Conference in Bucharest, only occasional statements had been made by WCC on this subject. The Moderator in his report to Central Committee had highlighted the urgency of this global issue by saying that the WCC "should immediately embark on a study process, tackling the issue in all its dimensions, manifestations and implications".

The involvement of the WCC would strengthen the process in Cairo on issues such as the relationship of sustainability to population, women's reproductive rights, the responsibilities of men, and the significance of population issues to Indigenous Peoples. The different approaches to population issues within the Christian community would also be made visible.

The Unit III Committee therefore *recommended* that:

- a) the WCC send a delegation including women and youth to the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo;
- b) the WCC develop a study document and a study process for the churches throughout this process;
- c) after gathering reports on the work of member churches on this issue, and after the 1994 Cairo Conference, the WCC hold a consultation on population and development;
- d) a plenary session on this issue be held at the 1995 Central Committee meeting on the basis of the outcome of the above Consultation.

Dr Mogedal stressed the importance of the preparatory phase for the Cairo Conference. Many churches were actively working with their governments regarding inputs and

strategies for the Conference and there was a building-up of consensus around it. She felt the WCC should emphasise the importance of networking among churches that are seeking to contribute to the Conference, perhaps by inviting them to take an active part in this process.

Bishop Serapion affirmed that the WCC member churches in Egypt were actively involved in addressing the population issue and attention should be drawn to their work in the preparatory process for the UN Conference.

Mr Kobia said the General Secretary had already requested churches to share with the Council what they are doing on this issue; a networking strategy would help to enhance this sharing process.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of these recommendations.

5. *WCC Team Visit to Australia 1993 (jointly agreed by Units III and IV)*

Having received the report of the 1993 WCC team visit to Australia, the Unit III and Unit IV Committees affirmed that the WCC commitment of solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must gain momentum and "move beyond words". The Committees also affirmed the forthcoming Round Table in Sydney between ecumenical partners and representatives of the Aboriginal and Islander communities, as a joint venture of Unit IV and Unit III; they acknowledged that this Round Table would be a key mechanism.

The Unit III and IV Committees reported that inter-Unit consideration would be given to joint support for Aboriginal and Islander leadership training exercises and education programmes; that Unit IV would urge the Regional Groups to ensure that Indigenous Peoples have just access to resources and decision-making; that Units III and IV would monitor the follow-up to the Federal legislation on Native Title and particularly the negotiations for the introduction of further legislation to include a "social justice package".

Units III and IV would continue to be alert to ways of supporting Aboriginal and Islander groups and movements, both in solidarity action and financial support, with special reference to the continuing land struggle in Western Australia where state legislation is in conflict with the federal legislation on Native Title. The Units would explore future cooperation with the Australian Council of Churches and its member churches, especially in their efforts for repentance and reconciliation, and work to strengthen solidarity among non-Aboriginal peoples. Units III and IV would extend existing mechanisms to promote opportunities for linking and networking Aboriginal and Islander peoples with partners in other regions for advocacy and support. They would continue their commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal and Islander voices are heard telling their stories of their struggle, and they would work together in keeping the member churches fully informed of the situation of Aboriginal and Islander peoples, of WCC action in cooperation with the Australian churches and all other aspects of the

commitment to the Aboriginal and Islander people made at the Seventh Assembly in Canberra in 1991.

The Unit III and IV Committees *requested* Unit I to ensure that the contribution of Indigenous Peoples find its place in its programmes on spirituality.

The Unit III Committee *recommended* the convening of a WCC consultation of Indigenous Peoples involved in land claim struggles against international mining consortia.

Bishop Boseto, who led the team visit, pointed out that Indigenous People can contribute to many other aspects besides spirituality: such as survival, security, justice, life, the unity of humanity. Perhaps Unit I should look into these issues also. Indigenous Peoples are emerging to challenge the world today.

The Central Committee **agreed** to this recommendation.

6. *Ecumenical Monitoring Programme on South Africa (EMPSA)*

The Unit III Committee discussed the situation in South Africa in the light of the role so far played by the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa between September 1992 and 1993, and appealed for strong support for the monitoring of the electoral process by the churches and all partners in the ecumenical family. Such support should be expressed through the participation of as many church monitors (local and international) as possible to cover every polling station.

The Unit Committee *urged* the WCC to intensify its campaign and advocacy for the participation of all South Africans in the electoral process. The exercise of this basic human right must also include the right to political freedom in the whole country. The Unit Committee considers training and voter education as a matter of urgency and an essential component of the monitoring programme. The WCC should assist the SACC to train pastors and lay people in voter education. This process would identify and equip local monitors and electoral officers.

The Unit Committee *urged* the WCC to pay particular attention to all the implications of this programme for the existing programmatic and administrative arrangements between WCC and the SACC.

The Unit Committee *recommended* that:

- a) the WCC consider how it might contribute to the establishment of a more comprehensive system which would include monitoring of the security and defense forces during the electoral process of April 1994;
- b) the WCC assist the churches and the entire ecumenical family to prepare for the situation beyond April 27 (election day).

Dr Sherry pointed out that if the churches were to be of assistance prior to the elections, they would need guidance and instruction as soon as possible because of the brief time available.

Mr Ntoni-Nzinga said that more people were needed for the monitoring process than the 200 originally envisaged; it was hoped to recruit as many as possible from the South, as well as from WCC member churches in all areas of the world. Many churches and other bodies in the North were contributing both human and financial resources. This programme for peace and active solidarity was aimed at trying to help the people and create an atmosphere of dialogue and understanding.

Dr Kobia added that the task was enormous and the most we could hope to do was to train monitors who could then train others and thus increase the scope of the programme. Monitors who had been involved in election processes in other parts of Africa were also coming to help in South Africa. All possible help was urgently needed to ensure the continuation of the process.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of the above recommendations.

7. *Sanctions and South Africa*

Under the apartheid system, government and business systematically deformed the economy. Today South Africa has one of the most unequal distributions of income and wealth in the world; a shrinking economy in which only half the work force can find formal employment; high costs, gross over-concentration of ownership and markets, and management inadequately prepared to solve these problems. The sobering reality is that the correction of these structural distortions will require years of cooperation between the new democratic government, its partners in civil society and the international community.

The Unit Committee *welcomed* the more than two years' work of the SACC/SACBC Task Force on Economic Matters; it *encouraged* member churches to work in partnership with this Task force to explore national and international economic structures as they relate to the reconstruction process in South Africa.

The Unit Committee supported the SACC Code of Conduct for Businesses Operating in South Africa and *urged* member churches to provide the financial and technical expertise necessary to develop a viable monitoring mechanism for the Code. In addition, the WCC *urged* SACC to continue a process of consultation with the business community, political parties, churches and other organs of civil society around the SACC Code of Conduct. The Committee also supported the filing of shareholder resolutions calling for companies operating in South Africa to endorse the SACC Code of Conduct and to report to shareholders on its implementation.

The Unit Committee *encouraged* South Africa's creditor banks to roll over outstanding loans on terms conducive to South Africa's long-term democratic development and to increase the capacity of South African institutions to provide financial resources to those groups previously denied equal access to credit.

The Unit III Committee *recommended* that the Central Committee call for the lifting of all sanctions and other financial and economic pressures to end apartheid (with the exception of the existing embargoes on strategic materials); and encourage companies to (re)invest in South Africa in the manner outlined in the SACC Code of Conduct.

Ms Engel felt that the issue of sanctions in general - as opposed to those related specifically to South Africa or ex-Yugoslavia - should be given more attention by the WCC, and proposed that a working group be set up to study the effectiveness of sanctions as a contribution towards non-military resolution of conflicts; to establish guidelines to assess whether to support or refuse sanctions; results to be reported to Central Committee in September 1995.

This recommendation was welcomed by Dr Kässmann on behalf of the Unit Committee. However, since it related to sanctions in general, it was felt more appropriate to include it under item 10 - Programme to Overcome Violence, point d).

Bishop Muttiah supported the Unit Committee's recommendation regarding the lifting of sanctions, but urged the WCC to continue to support the people of South Africa as the country emerges into a new phase. He felt this should be mentioned, even if not included in the wording of the recommendation. Ms Walker-Smith agreed that many churches had seen sanctions as a way of supporting the people of South Africa, who must not be left with the impression that they have been abandoned once sanctions are lifted.

Ms Malpas expressed surprise that no suggestion had been made for a prayer vigil for South Africa on 27 April - election day. She therefore proposed that the WCC call upon the churches to hold such a vigil. Dr Kässmann accepted this proposal on behalf of the Committee.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of this recommendation, including the proposal for a prayer vigil on 27 April.

The following two items were for information:

8. *Sudan*

The Unit Committee noted with appreciation the follow-up to the 1992 Central Committee resolution on Sudan, including the Ecumenical Team Visit to Sudan (November 1993) and its report. The Committee was pleased to learn of preparations for a March 1994 consultation which would convene ecumenical and church agencies related to Sudan, ecumenical peace groups, and experts on the Sudan.

The Unit III International Affairs team, in collaboration with WCC staff on Christian-Muslim dialogue, should encourage implementation of the proposal by the Sudanese government for a Muslim-Christian Forum recommended at the Conference on Religions held in Khartoum in April 1993. The Unit would undertake continued monitoring of the peace process in Sudan in close cooperation with churches there, who must be viewed as the subjects, not observers or objects, of efforts for peace and reconciliation in their country.

9. *Bougainville*

At the next meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Unit III International Affairs team would continue to follow up and support Resolution 51 on Bougainville from the 49th session of the Commission in March 1993 and the resolution of the October 1992 ACP-EEC (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific - European Economic Community) Joint Assembly. Together with Unit IV, and in close cooperation with the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), the Unit III International Affairs team would visit the churches in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Solomon Islands to talk to the PNG Council of Churches and the Solomon Islands Christian Association, paying special attention to the plight of refugees fleeing from the blockaded areas of Bougainville to the Solomon Islands.

During its discussions, the Unit Committee noted the initiative taken by the Chiefs of Bougainville to hold a Pan-Bougainville Conference. The Committee requested member churches in the PNG Council of Churches, in consultation with the Pacific Conference of Churches, to urge the PNG government to recognise and support the wishes of the people.

Bishop Muttiah said that current reports indicated the possibility of a break-through which hopefully would lead to peace in the area. Any effort by the WCC to encourage cooperation between the churches in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands would be of assistance.

10. *Programme to Overcome Violence*

The Unit III Committee recalled its 1992 mandate from Central Committee:

- i. that active non-violent action be affirmed as a clear emphasis in programmes and projects related to conflict resolution;
- ii. that Unit III, in cooperation with Unit I, through a study and reflection process, should clarify to what extent the fellowship (*koinonia*) of the World Council is called into question when churches fail to categorically condemn any systematic violation of human rights that takes place in their country (CC minutes 1992, p.95).

The Unit Committee noted that, due to major transitions in staff and other major programme commitments, Units I and III had not yet been able to respond adequately to the second recommendation above. The Committee

recommended the following proposals as an alternative, more comprehensive approach, embracing the 1992 Central Committee recommendations:

- a) that the WCC establish a Programme to Overcome Violence, with the purpose of challenging and transforming the global culture of violence in the direction of a culture of just peace. An initial consultation should be held to shape this programme, including suggestions for funding, before the Central Committee meeting in 1995;
- b) that two initiatives already underway, i.e. (1) a consultation to be held in Corrymeela, Northern Ireland, June 1994, entitled "Building a Culture of Peace: the Churches' Contribution" and (2) a database of church-related peace groups, be among the first steps towards this programme;
- c) that, in the context of current discussions on *Koinonia*, Units I and III engage in a joint study on the ecclesial dimensions of the pursuit of a culture of non-violence and just peace in order to address the ecclesiological and constitutional issues posed by the second recommendation from the 1992 Central Committee (see above);
- d) *that a study be initiated to assess the role of sanctions, their effectiveness and conditions of their applicability as an important means towards peaceful resolution and transformation of conflict. Results should be reported to Central Committee in 1995.*
- e) that, in view of the need to confront and overcome the "spirit, logic and practice of war" and to develop new theological approaches, consonant with the teachings of Christ, which start not with war and move to peace, but with the need for justice, this may be a time when the churches, together, should face the challenge to give up any theological or other justification of the use of military power, and to become a koinonia dedicated to the pursuit of a just peace;
- f) that the Central Committee request member churches, *in cooperation with non-member churches and NGOs*, to share with the WCC their positions on peace with justice, the development of a just peace culture as an alternative to one governed by the spirit, logic and practice of violence, and on education for peace;
- g) that the Unit III International Affairs team collate and provide an initial analysis of the replies received for members of the Central Committee, if possible by the time of its next meeting.

A number of proposals for changes in wording were considered, and those accepted are included in italics. Ms Engel's recommendation on sanctions is included as point d) above.

Considerable discussion ensued, the majority of speakers welcoming the proposal for a Programme to Overcome Violence.

Mr Gill pleaded that those who would carry out this initiative not forget the hard lessons learned in the past, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, from those who were struggling

for freedom in South Africa. Violence has many more faces than the churches are often prepared to recognise; non-violence is often more complex and sometimes more dangerous than people want to believe. So good use should be made of the "ecumenical memory". Dr Kässmann assured Mr Gill that the 1973 document on Violence/non-Violence would indeed be a part of the process for this new initiative.

Secondly, Mr Gill hoped that a less pretentious title could be found, while Dr Page felt it would be better to avoid such warlike metaphors.

Ms Bösenberg thought that such a programme should not only be approached from the point of view of international affairs and resolution of conflicts; it was also important to deal with anthropology and what is meant by violence and aggression against minority groups or violence between women and men. Study documents should not just be descriptive but also contribute by explaining the phenomenon and looking at it from different viewpoints.

Ms Bazett said it was clear that this was a long-term process, but if the Units were to address violence in the particular area they were working in, and if there were a central point where the various aspects could be drawn together, she felt some progress might be made, step by step. Specific points for the consultation to look at might include e.g. gang violence, violence against children, access to weapons, influence of the mass media, just and unjust structures, etc.

Mr Clements noted that there was no reference to a culture of peace, nor of the role of international institutions that exist to promote peace. We should not forget that the 50th anniversary of the United Nations is approaching, at a time when there is deep scepticism about its commitment to its obligations under the UN Charter.

Prof. Romanides added that some consideration should also be given to the history of the theology of violence.

Dr Wilkens expressed support for the proposal and indicated a number of expectations of such a programme: the question of peace ethics was open again and he felt it would be wise for the WCC to play a leading part in this debate. In the historic peace churches new initiatives were taking place in the service of peace and the kind of network that the WCC might provide here would be helpful. Such a programme should include a study on the role played by religion in ethnic conflicts; our churches today face critical questions about faith and religion. Finally, if, in dealing with violence and the use of violence, we find we are not of the same opinion, we need to reflect whether this has consequences for our understanding of koinonia.

Ms Walker-Smith asked to what extent we had tried to discover the root causes for the existence of violence? Secondly, we must be aware that many in the Peace Movements have alienated those concerned with justice, and we must be careful not to set up divisions between these two issues. Regarding theology of life, we should avoid taking

a defensive posture against violence, but have a clear theological understanding of why we are engaging in this process.

In responding to some of the comments, Dr Kässmann reiterated that this was not yet a programme but a preliminary idea, and it was the task of the consultation to give shape to it; proposals would be brought back to Central Committee in 1995.

Mr Jonsson referred to the pacifism versus just war debate which had reached a certain stalemate. Those with differing opinions were illustrating that the church over the centuries had been more obsessed by war than by peace. This new programme offered opportunity to take on a new focus and reach for the goal of justice; he saw this as a good new start for the ecumenical movement.

Mr Sommerfeldt on the other hand did not see it as a new start but rather as a return to the earlier discussion. He regretted that a new programme of this nature might lead us to say that we must give up justification of the use of military power or armed resistance. He hoped this could be avoided, and that emphasis would be placed on practical models for overcoming violence without using violence.

Discussion continued at a later session, with Dr Nababan moderating.

Metr. Chrysanthos regretted that there was no mention of Cyprus where violence has continued for 20 years. Dr Kässmann responded that the question of Cyprus was in the hands of the international affairs/CCIA team to follow up, even if it was not mentioned specifically in the Unit III report.

Bishop Storey welcomed the idea of a programme to overcome violence, because not only does it challenge war but it focuses on the meaning of peace with justice. The church has to face such challenges, though it took 18 centuries before it repudiated slavery. Racism was a discovery of the 20th century and the church had recognised and repudiated it. We have not succeeded in eradicating either slavery or racism but the world is in no doubt as to where the church stands on these issues.

Recalling the sermon by Bishop Mogoba at the Opening Worship, Bishop Storey told the Committee that Bishop Mogoba had suffered torture and imprisonment, yet he had called for such a programme at a moment when the people of South Africa have just concluded a liberation struggle. Why? Because this is a society where the weapons dedicated to liberation have killed more people in this land than died in 40 years of apartheid.

Dr Tolen also expressed support for the programme but agreed with those who urged that care be taken in carrying it out. The people in our churches read the Bible and find much reference to violence, sometimes as if it were willed by God. It was important to explain why this was the case and why we were trying to make it clear that it is our moral obligation to behave otherwise. People must understand that God chose the crucifixion for our salvation - although God could have chosen another way. If we

cannot help our church members to understand this, they were unlikely to understand this programme.

In response, Dr Kässmann said that a major part of the study would indeed be to look at the biblical references, not forgetting to seek the other thread in the Bible which talks of resistance against violence.

Dr Miller saw the programme as an opportunity to work at the question of violence in a new way - around the concept of a just peace. It addressed questions the WCC had been concerned about for many years. We do not need to fall back into the old categories but can look at what it means to be active in developing methods for a just peace.

The recommendation as amended was put to the vote, and Central Committee **voted in favour** of the proposals contained therein.

11. *Youth*

The Unit III Committee received the Report of the Mandated Working Group on Youth, and recorded the following comments:

- improvements need to be made in communication between all levels of ecumenical youth work - local, national, and international;
- in order to encourage greater involvement by youth at national and local levels of the church, Unit III should provide information on successful youth models and programmes;
- the goal of empowerment as a style of working with youth within Unit III was highly supported.

The Unit Committee received a report on the Ecumenical Global Gathering on Youth and Students, and made the following comments:

- recognising the difficulties of collaborative work, the Unit III Committee commended the WCC for the collaborative work with the other EGGYS partners on the EGGYS process;
- the Committee encouraged continued cooperation with other Units, EGGYS partners, and new organisations;
- the Committee encouraged and supported follow up work on EGGYS that would take place within national and regional councils and member churches.

The Unit III Committee affirmed the Young Women's Network and the Young Women's Festival to be held in Fiji in November 1994 around the theme, "I am Worthy - Young Women call for a Violence-free World", and in light of the success of the young women's network, the Committee requested that the WCC explore possibilities for work with young men.

12. *Women*

The Unit III Committee received the Report of the Mandated Working Group on Women, and recorded the following comments:

- improvements need to be made in communication between all levels of ecumenical women's work - local, national and international;
- the cross-unit staff team should be responsible for monitoring the participation of women in all activities of the WCC; staff from each Unit would be responsible for the monitoring within the respective Units. The Mandated Working Groups for Women and Youth would monitor the development of programmatic collaboration;
- the Executive Committee should be responsible for monitoring the participation of women and youth in the Eighth Assembly. This should include all categories of involvement, i.e. advisers, observers, etc.

The Unit Committee affirmed the role of all WCC Units in the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women, Development, and Peace to be held in Beijing in September 1995. All Units should include follow-up on this conference in their work plans, and should report back to Central Committee in 1996 on their efforts following this world conference.

The Unit Committee affirmed the work on Violence against Women and called on all Units to engage in programmes on this issue. Issues of violence against lesbian women and differently-abled women should be of special focus. *All Units should respond to the issue of violence against women in their programmatic work, and report back to the Central Committee in 1997.*

The Unit Committee affirmed the work on Women under Racism within the programme of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

The Unit Committee requested that the mid-Decade evaluation of the WCC's work include two young persons (one male, one female) on the evaluation team. The evaluation should include a monitoring of all areas of participation by women; it should also include an evaluation of WCC policy including staffing policy. A report on this evaluation should be included with the report on the mid-Decade visits and sent to the Central Committee in 1997.

Dr Tsetsis welcomed Unit III's work on Violence against Women, but was concerned that two categories of women were singled out for special focus. He was referring to the sentence, "Issues of violence against lesbian women and differently-abled women should be of special focus" in the text of the report (see above). Many other groups of women deserve our special attention also, and by indicating only two we discriminate against the others. He **moved** that this sentence be deleted.

Dr Sherry suggested that, rather than deleting the sentence, the categories be broadened, listing those groups of women in society who suffer discrimination. Dr Kässmann, responding, said that these two groups were especially mentioned in the Unit Committee because violence has occurred against them in recent years. The fact that they were highlighted did not mean that other groups of

women against whom violations of human rights have taken place were not part of the programme too. The Committee wished to retain this sentence.

The motion was put to the vote, but was **defeated** by 44 against deleting the sentence in question, 43 in favour of deleting it, and 4 abstentions.

Bishop Serapion asked for clarification about the call to engage with regard to violence against lesbian women, the question of challenging their behaviour and helping them to repent and be reconciled with God.

Hegoumen Zhiliaev agreed that it was important for the WCC to work against violence; the difficulty for him was the grouping together of lesbian women and differently-abled women. People might misinterpret it if in our Christian understanding we put these two groups together. He proposed to add after "lesbian women" that their practice is a sin.

Fr Petliuchenko regretted the wish to maintain this wording because it generated a new and deeper problem which affects not only women. He had participated in the Unit III discussion but was not aware of the specific reference to lesbian women; the Orthodox were thus surprised at this wording in the report. He urged that a solution be found that would satisfy everyone.

Dr Kässmann reiterated that no changes had been made in the original draft of the Unit's report, and no question about the sentence at issue had been raised in the Committee.

Ms Ganaba noted that the question of sexuality had already been touched on in the framework of the HIV/AIDS discussion, and a study on human sexuality had been mentioned. Secondly, she felt that in talking about violence against women, there should be some reference to violence against women in families. Pointed out that not all churches were ready to take up questions related to homosexuality, she asked for greater mutual understanding of each other's positions on such difficult issues.

Dr Kässmann emphasised that it was not simply a question of solidarity but of protecting women, because a good deal of violence had taken place against these two groups of women. It did not imply any expression of opinion about their sexuality. The programme also focused on violence in the family, in the church, in refugee camps - wherever it takes place. Unit III was informing Central Committee of a discussion that took place; no vote was required.

Dr Love appreciated the depth of difference that people have on issues related to violence against women, but felt that as Christians we must be open to helping protect any and all women by ministering to them when they are suffering. Jesus Christ did not ask about a person's beliefs before helping them - neither should we. We must reach out to protect them from pain and heal those who are hurting.

Fr Kishkovsky referred to the painful debate taking place in the US around the issue of homosexuality between those Christians who assert that homosexuality is a sin and those

who believe it is not. While this document was clearly speaking only about violence, there were those who feared that to raise this issue in relation to a group of women would open a more general discussion about the appropriateness of homosexual behaviour. He called on members of Central Committee to recognise this fear. The fact that the vote against deleting the sentence in question had been so close (44/43) was a warning to the WCC about the nature and possibility of this kind of debate in the future.

Metr. Kirill agreed that the Central Committee was approaching a dangerous debate which could adversely affect its unity. He did not intend to address the issue at this stage but stated that he would vote against this document and prevent its publication in Russia. At a time when the women of his country were suffering so greatly from violence in ethnic conflicts and from the results of the economic depression, he could not as a pastor accept this focus on lesbian women. He feared that, by one vote, the WCC was entering a dangerous situation and he could not accept it.

The Moderator, Archbishop Keshishian, intervened, recognising that this was a divisive issue being faced in our fellowship. It was not the only divisive issue and others would arise because we come from different national, social and political contexts and we have different attitudes towards such matters. He pointed out that the intention of this sentence was not to pass judgement but to state a fact. Homosexuality is a reality, understood in different ways in different cultures and in different parts of the world. The churches and the WCC cannot remain silent - it is a question that will have to be faced sooner or later.

Ms Best referred to earlier discussion on the issue of violence against women, and **moved** an amendment that all Units respond to the issue of violence against women in their programmatic work and report to Central Committee in 1997.

Ms Scoutas was concerned that Unit III had not raised the issue of violence against children; she urged that this aspect be included in such an amendment. Dr Kässmann felt that the special focus of this programme was on women; Ms Scoutas' point would be mentioned in the minutes and would be taken up in the framework of the proposed new programme to overcome violence.

The General Secretary explained that this emphasis on women was part of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, a common programme of the Council supported by all programme units and directed by a staff group representing all Units. He pointed out that Central Committee had accepted a special focus of a programme to overcome violence - which must surely include violence against children as well as against other groups who experience violence. Here the Council was being asked to focus on the violence that women experience.

Ms Best felt it was important to highlight the point in order to keep us accountable. The Central Committee **voted in favour** of the amendment (*in italics in the text of the recommendation above*).

Concluding the debate, Dr Nababan ruled that the Unit Committee had shared information which could be either accepted or rejected. The Central Committee voted to **receive** the sections on Youth and Women for information; there were several negative votes and some abstentions.

Mr Clements raised a general point about Unit III and its methodology: a number of specific items for further study had been remitted to the Unit and he wondered whether there was a mechanism for consultation with member churches and NCCs which may already be doing studies on some of these areas: how could these be drawn upon? Dr Kobia responded that the Unit was taking into account the work already being done in the churches and elsewhere, and the intention was to involve them further wherever possible.

The Central Committee voted to **receive** the full report of the Unit III Committee; Metropolitan Kirill and Mr Kirov asked that their negative votes be recorded, and Metr. Kirill asked that his personal protest against the document be minuted. There were also a number of abstentions.

Metr. Audi felt that reports of this nature should not contain items that are only for information. Dr Nababan noted the need to clarify our terminology to ensure a common understanding.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNIT IV: SHARING AND SERVICE

Archbishop Keshishian, presiding, invited Bishop Drexel Gomez, moderator of Unit IV Committee, to present the report.

In his introduction, Bishop Gomez said that Unit IV had had a productive meeting and was appreciative of the work done by the Executive Director and staff. One of the four recommendations the Committee wished to bring for action had been drafted jointly with Unit III and action would be taken in the framework of Unit III's report.

1. *"Putting Action into Faith"*

Recognising that sharing and service need to be grounded in biblical and theological reflection, inter-relating theological reflection and faithful practice, the Unit IV Committee *recommended* that Central Committee urge the WCC member churches and related bodies to engage in a form of theological reflection entitled "Putting Action into Faith". The draft flyer "Will you reflect with us?" was intended to invite others to use the model. Unit IV would provide additional resources to assist them in doing so.

"Putting Action into Faith" would involve the following steps:

- a) taking careful account of what we have learned to date and the insights we have inherited about the concept of diakonia;
- b) actively serving in ways that are compatible with this inherited understanding;
- c) seeing what questions are thrown up by these practical attempts to be true to what we have learned;
- d) trying to deal with the questions with the help of appropriate disciplines, especially the bible and our Christian faith traditions;
- e) allowing this reflection to confirm, change, and enlarge our understanding of diakonia, and so
- f) to act differently in the light of it.

This form of action and reflection would require us to be in touch with one another as best we can as an ecumenical family in order to question and complement one another's insights.

Gathering up what we have inherited, the concept of diakonia from which we start out on this renewed cycle of action and reflection would have the following characteristics:

- a) it puts the least advantaged first;
- b) is mutual - in that those who serve the needy accept their own need to receive and the ability of the needy to give;
- c) acts with those it claims to serve and not for them or about them or over them;
- d) respects the needy's own judgement as to what their needs are and how best they are met;
- e) adds to the power of the needy to control what happens to them;
- f) responds to immediate needs whilst understanding, resisting and transforming the systems which create and aggravate them;
- g) shares the resources that promote life;
- h) remains faithful and refuses to desert the needy - even when there are difficulties;
- i) acknowledges the inevitable cost as well as gain;
- j) gives an account of itself to those it serves;
- k) sets no boundaries to its compassion.

Bishop Gomez expressed the Unit's hope that those who use this model of theological reflection would suggest ways of improving it. The Unit would adopt this model in relation to its own activities.

The Central Committee **agreed** to the recommendation.

2. *Proposed statement on Uprooted People*

There followed a video presentation entitled "Not the same any more", illustrating the plight faced by some of today's uprooted people. Ethnic conflicts, political disputes, tribe against tribe, community against community - all these situations were causing an ever

increasing number of people to flee from their homes. Testimonies gave witness to the fact that uprootedness makes people more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and sexual violence including rape as a weapon of war.

The Unit IV Committee *recommended* that, recognising the growing crisis involving 20 million refugees, 26 million internally displaced, as well as millions of migrant workers, and the urgency of their plight, the Central Committee authorise - in partnership with the churches - the development of a policy statement on uprooted people to be presented to the 1995 Central Committee meeting. Such a statement should include:

- a) clarification of who "uprooted" people are;
- b) ways to uphold their protection and dignity;
- c) Christian responsibility to challenge the associated xenophobia;
- d) the involvement of the churches;
- e) specific recommendations for action.

Further, the Central Committee was asked to affirm that this issue should be a major agenda item at the 1995 Central Committee meeting.

Bishop Gomez said the Unit Committee had considered five points in relation to this recommendation: the need to empower local congregations in their ministry to uprooted people; lobbying; supporting international conventions relating to refugees; and addressing the root causes of forced migration and displacement. Metr. Chrysanthos suggested adding that uprooted people have the right to return to their homes.

Pastor Twagirayesu underlined the urgency of the situation, and urged that rather than postponing this task until 1995, the Executive take up the problem immediately with the United Nations. Account needs to be taken of the laws relating to refugees, since many people today are refugees in their own countries.

Dr Page urged that the issue of xenophobia be placed earlier among the points listed because this was such a dehumanising attitude and one that must be addressed urgently.

Ms Blyth expressed the hope that members of Central Committee would use the video "Not the same any more" to help raise awareness among their churches. Responding to Pastor Twagirayesu, she explained that Unit IV wanted to communicate the idea of "in partnership with the churches" in developing a new policy statement. One of the aspects was indeed that of internally displaced people, for whom there are insufficient, often non-existent support systems. She affirmed that Unit IV would work closely with other Units and Offices; there were many interlinkages, for example on human rights questions and religious minorities.

The General Secretary underlined the need to work "in partnership with the churches", and he urged members of Central Committee to take upon themselves the commitment to work with WCC Units out of their own struggle for a new understanding of the

Christian responsibility regarding uprooted people. The basic conditions, shown in the video, had changed radically since the WCC Refugee Service was first established in 1944 to respond to the needs in war-stricken Europe after the Second World War. Today the situation was quite different, yet there was a tendency to respond at the level of fifty years ago. While it was important for the WCC to produce a new policy statement, this would only be effective if it expressed a new will on the part of the churches.

The Central Committee **agreed** to the recommendation.

Bishop Gomez invited Rev. Rachel Paulin to read a special minute drafted to mark the occasion of the 50th anniversary of work of this WCC Unit:

3. *50th Anniversary Minute*

In recognition of the World Council of Churches' contribution to the diaconal ministry of the churches, the Unit IV Committee requested Central Committee to commend to the member churches and related bodies the following minute on the 50th anniversary of the WCC Programme on Sharing and Service (Unit IV):

1994 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of what is now the WCC Programme for Sharing and Service - Unit IV. It is significant that, even before the official founding of the WCC in 1948, because of the agonising conflicts throughout the world, the churches needed and created this instrument for the expression of their growing sense of the universal koinonia of the church of Jesus Christ, and for a practical demonstration that when one suffers, all suffer. This ecumenical sharing between churches across national and confessional borders has rendered a unique service in many fields of pastoral and social care, transforming the churches' diaconal offering into concrete action.

It is with deep gratitude that we recognise the many courageous initiatives that have been taken over these last fifty years, and we pay tribute to the many men and women at international and local levels who brought into being and developed this particular instrument of the WCC.

This fiftieth anniversary takes place at a critical moment in modern history. In the four years since the collapse of the Berlin wall the world has gone through many changes. The consequences and possibilities of the new world order have been highlighted. Above all, three familiar themes emerge: persistent poverty, continuous conflict, and an economic order that remains unfair and unsustainable. Three familiar themes, but the challenge more urgent than ever before.

The facts of *POVERTY* are well known. More than a quarter of the world's population live in absolute poverty. Two billion lack safe drinking water, 14 million children die of hunger every year. Poverty kills children as surely as guns and land-mines. In fact, poverty claims more victims than the warfields. But the suffering of children and women in particular remains a silent emergency.

Nor has the end of the Cold War meant an end to conflict. In spite of peace agreements, the fighting continues in many places such as Angola and Afghanistan. In other situations - including Sri Lanka or Sudan - long-term solutions seem illusive whilst new conflicts have arisen fuelled by ethnic conflicts submerged for years under authoritarian rule.

The prevailing global economic system with its so-called free market system - now so universal - has long promised to increase the wealth of the world community in such a way that even the poorest will benefit in the end if not in the short-term. Whatever advances have been made, however, the poorest of the poor in many part of the world see little sign of that promise being fulfilled.

Poverty, conflict and economic oppression, racial, cultural, political and military oppression on the scale we are witnessing uproots people. When tension explodes into violence people leave their communities, and as the number of uprooted people around the world increases their situation becomes more precarious. 26 million people are internally displaced because of internal conflicts, famine, or ecological destruction, and there is no international system to protect them. Refugees are increasing but the places to go to are decreasing.

The special genius of the WCC Programme for Sharing and Service is the way it has its feet on the ground and unites churches and their agencies around the world in action. Over the past 50 years this has involved them in: service to refugees, post-war reconstruction, emergencies, strengthening the churches for service, community development, education and training, local diakonia. Here are five more recent examples:

- coordinating the churches' response to the almost unprecedented drought in Southern African since 1982, affecting 30 million people. This was just one of 50+ emergency appeals world-wide during 1993;
- supporting 500 women in India, including Dalits, to have access to credit loans. This is part of a strategy channelling one million dollars annually to the poorest communities so that they can develop their own enterprises;
- providing and supporting church related programmes in Thailand where young women and, increasingly, children are drawn into prostitution to survive poverty. Prostitution in turn means vulnerability to HIV/AIDS;
- advocating at the UN on behalf of uprooted people, and for ratification by countries that have signed the conventions;
- giving voice to the voiceless: women and children in Bougainville, victims of violence in ex-Yugoslavia, dispossessed Aboriginal people of Australia, forgotten Palestinians in the Middle East.

Church action around the world, if it is not to be mere activism, must be rooted in reflection. Following the example of Jesus the servant, we struggle to put our faith into practice and to use what we learn from those struggles to increase our understanding of our faith. Such reflection, whilst needing to draw on many disciplines, pays

particular attention to biblical and theological insights. After 50 years of service and sharing our reflection has highlighted that, for us, **diakonia**:

- puts the least advantaged first;
- is mutual, in that those who serve the needy accept their own need to receive and the ability of the needy to give;
- acts with those it claims to serve and not for them or about them or over them;
- respects the needy's own judgement as to what their needs are and how best they are met;
- adds to the power of the needy to control what happens to them;
- responds to immediate needs whilst understanding, resisting and transforming the systems which create and aggravate them;
- shares the resources that promote life;
- remains faithful and refuses to desert the needy - even when there are difficulties;
- acknowledges the inevitable cost as well as gain;
- gives an account of itself to those it serves;
- sets no boundaries to its compassion.

This reflection needs to go on in partnership with other areas of the Council's life. We need, for example, to contribute to the insights gained from our active experience into theological work on faith and the church, and to be nourished in turn by fresh thinking about the ethical dimensions of Christian unity and mission.

If it is to be effective in service, church action around the world must be mindful of the deeper causes of people's suffering and contribute to their removal. Here again we need to work with others and particularly with those who can help us to understand the systems and structures which promote such tragedies as poverty, conflict and exile, and to see that our responses to human need take them into account.

Finally, the future work of the WCC, through its Programme for Sharing and Service, must help the churches and their agencies in different places to ensure that their varied contributions are brought together, not only into a well coordinated programme of practical church action, but also into a global strategy for change.

Mr Fischer, General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), congratulated the Unit Committee on this statement. He pointed to a dimension that had not received mention: the inter-church aid aspect of the work that Unit IV and its predecessor were established to do - the way churches have helped each other mutually, particularly across denominational lines. The ecumenical sharing that has been part of the tradition of Inter-Church Aid had not found a place here and he felt it was worthy of mention.

The Moderator noted that the statement outlined the significant service rendered to our churches and the world through this WCC programme, while spelling out the responsibilities and challenges ahead. He invited members of Central Committee to accept it with gratitude, and to commend it to the WCC member churches, agencies and related organisations. The Central Committee **agreed**.

4. *Recommendation on Indigenous Peoples*

[The text of this recommendation, drafted jointly with the Unit III Committee, appears under the report of Unit III (p.108 - Team Visit to Australia)].

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Concluding, Bishop Gomez indicated that the Unit Committee wished to highlight some points from the reports of the Executive Director and the Secretary for Finance and Administration; these were therefore being shared with Central Committee for information, together with a text on new models of sharing:

5. *Report of Unit Executive Director*

The Unit Committee received the Director's report with appreciation; it focused on the policy direction of the Unit within the framework of its six-point mandate. Of special note were:

- developments in inter-unit cooperation especially with Unit III/international affairs and PCR teams and through the staff working groups on Women, Youth, Education, and Biblical and theological reflection;
- the initiation of a major review of the Council's work in the field of emergencies;
- the work being done to carry forward the policy of regionalisation including:
 - = a comprehensive review of Round Tables,
 - = strengthening of relations and communications between Round Tables and regional groups,
 - = clarifying cooperation between Unit IV and Regional Ecumenical Organisations,
 - = developing reporting procedures to strengthen mutual accountability;
- efforts to clarify Unit IV's contribution to Biblical and theological reflection;
- fresh initiatives being taken to develop a new WCC policy on uprooted people.

With reference to the projected review of the Council's work in the field of emergencies, Dr Wilkens expressed the hope that this would lead to a new working relationship with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). He stressed the importance of not simply coordinating the various activities related to assistance in cases of emergencies, but of the need to create an integrated instrument that could serve also as a model for cooperation in other fields such as scholarships or health matters. He urged that efforts for the integration of emergencies programmes be taken up without delay.

Ms Blyth affirmed that this review was expected to take nine months, and would end in September with a seminar where all WCC's related agencies would be present, together with LWF. This review was not only a Geneva initiative but Unit IV was asking how the ecumenical family defines the nature of the response being made as churches.

6. *Report of Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration*

The Unit Committee received the finance report outlining revised principles and strategies as follows:

- greater transparency and accountability, including improved financial reporting at all levels of the Unit's work;
- increased participation of staff in planning budgets and support for them in financial reporting;
- consistency in procedures between desks;
- strategic fund-raising;
- assistance to implementing partners in financial management and reporting.

Because of changes in accounting procedures, the presentation of the 1993 report was not possible at this time. The Financial Report for 1992 followed the new format.

7. *A Particular Concern: New Models of Sharing*

Several key concerns had been noted here but no formal recommendation had been prepared by the Unit Committee. The importance of these points in the framework of Sharing and Service were however affirmed:

- a) **Good communications** are one way of improving our sharing and service. A particularly effective example is story-telling, as it has the advantage of allowing needy people to speak for themselves and to own their own situations, and it keeps faith with the Biblical and theological principles which undergird our work. Recent examples are reports on the November 1993 team visit to Australia - "Stories of the Land"- and on the team visit to Bougainville; and the Unit IV video on the effects of war on women, especially mass rape as a weapon of war.
- b) **Local congregations** have always been at the heart of the WCC's diaconal work, and to this end the Unit IV Committee affirmed the message of the plenary presentation on the role of the laity. We cite as examples the hospitality and practical help offered to refugees throughout the world by local congregations, and the work carried out by thousands of deacons world-wide in crisis situations, and in offering a pastoral ministry of encouragement and compassion.
- c) Persistent **poverty** continues to be the day-to-day reality for more than a quarter of the world's population - and there is increasing recognition of the complex relationship between poverty and conflict as well as between both of them and the international economic order, which calls for fresh responses.
- d) **Credit loan schemes** are increasingly seen as a viable tool in freeing communities from the cycle of dependency. Comments in favour of credit loan schemes were made from a variety of places in the world within the Unit IV Committee. A recent example has been among Dalit women in India.

In connection with this last point, the General Secretary drew the attention of members of Central Committee to the presence of Mr Gert van Maanen, the new director of the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS), which, together with ECLOF, represent two WCC-related credit loan schemes.

The Central Committee **received** the report of the Unit IV Committee with appreciation.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Rev. Nélide Ritchie, moderating, invited Ms Birgitta Rantakari, moderator of the Finance Committee, to present the report.

In her introduction, Ms Rantakari reminded Central Committee that her preliminary report had been cautiously optimistic about the financial situation of the Council. The Finance Committee felt that, in the short term, a degree of financial stability had been achieved, and attention should turn to "providing the resources" for the longer term continuation and development of the Council's work.

Regarding the Eighth Assembly, no detailed budget could be prepared until Central Committee had made decisions in connection with the size, style and site of the Assembly. Three aspects need consideration: - the cost to the WCC itself, local costs (which hopefully would to a large extent be covered locally), and the cost to the member churches for their delegates. Clearly these costs need to be kept to a reasonable level, but they should be seen as an investment in the future of the ecumenical movement.

Due to the timing of this present meeting, the Executive Committee had had to exercise its delegated powers and approve the accounts and budgets in September 1993, according to the guidelines laid down. Once Central Committee returns to a twelve-monthly pattern of meeting, the accounts and budgets would be presented to it for approval. Meanwhile, full reports on the work of the Finance Committees and staff were provided to members of Central Committee for their information.

Ms Rantakari presented the report of the Finance Committee as follows:

1. *General financial situation*

At the last meeting of Central Committee a modest operating surplus of Sfr.1.15m was reported for the year 1991 and the situation in 1992 appeared similar. In the event, as shown in the 1992 Financial Report, the year closed with an increase in operating funds of Sfr 2.55m.

In the intervening period, the work of the Council's financial staff had two main emphases: income development, and improving the basis of accounting structures and practices. The revised operating budget for 1994 and the preliminary budget for 1995 show anticipated losses, but, for reasons explained below, these would probably be eliminated. Thus it can be said that a measure of financial equilibrium has been attained, at least in the short-term, giving the Council opportunity to determine its priorities and develop its income to cover the likely cost.

However, it is important that Central Committee and staff remain vigilant and keep tight control of expenditure and staff levels to ensure that this stability is maintained. The assessment of the Cambridge Associates review in 1991,

repeated during their visit in March 1993, was that the Council's financial equilibrium is tenuous and requires an increase of income of 2.2% in real terms in order to conserve the current level of staffing and activity.

2. *Financial Report 1992*

The Committee reviewed the Financial Report and Accounts for 1992 which were approved by the Executive in September 1993 and circulated to all members of Central Committee. The overall situation appeared satisfactory, with an increase in operating funds of some Sfr 2.5m.

3. *Preliminary report on 1993*

Although it would be a while before the figures were known, first indications were that the results for the year were satisfactory, with expenditure below budget (due largely to budgeted staff positions remaining vacant longer than expected), while income had come in at a higher level than anticipated: there had been exceptional gains on the investment portfolios (because of world financial market trends), and on forward exchange transactions. The Financial Report would be available later in the year for approval by the Executive and circulation to Central Committee members.

4. *Budgets 1994/1995*

The operating budget for 1994 and the preliminary operating budget for 1995 had been approved by the Executive Committee in September 1993. In view of the developing trend for deficit budgets to become surpluses because of consistent savings in expenditure and modest increases in income, the Executive Committee agreed:

"that, while budgets should continue to be prepared assuming that all authorised staff positions are filled and that only assured income is included, the evaluation of a 'balanced budget' should allow the assumptions that:

- a) 5% of total staff positions are vacant at any given time, and
- b) income will in fact come in at a rate of 1% above the budget figure."

On this basis and in light of recent experience, the budget presented for 1994 would show a modest surplus of Sfr 90,000 and the preliminary budget for 1995 would show a shortfall of Sfr 375,000, which it is anticipated will be eliminated when the revised budget is presented in September 1994.

5. *Staffing matters*

A review of staff salaries and grades had taken place and, in September 1993, the Executive Committee agreed new salary scales which allow for *seniority supplements* to be pensionable, while *step increases* would take place only every two years instead of every eighteen months' as formerly. This would result in a slight overall saving for the Council. The Executive also relaxed the restrictions on the total number of staff from the previous figure of 256 "full time equivalents", but only where it can be clearly demonstrated that additional funding to cover the full cost of an appointment is available for its full term.

6. *Fund Balances and Reserves*

In view of the financial difficulties in 1991, the Finance Committee insisted at that time that each year's budget should be balanced without utilising fund balances. This had been achieved, but some Units have *Operating Fund Balances* (i.e. surplus funds built up in previous years) which have accumulated. A review of the Council's funds and reserves had therefore been undertaken (see below) and revised guidelines were agreed by the Executive Committee in September 1993. These are set out below for record purposes:

- a) When an expense can legitimately be covered by two sources of funds, the most highly designated funds will be used first;
- b) Some designation of funds is by the donor, some by the WCC (staff or Governing Bodies). Donor designated funds cannot be used for purposes other than those designated without the donor's consent - internal designation is not binding and may be changed by the Governing Bodies of the WCC. Where there are designated funds surplus to requirements, attempt will be made to obtain re-designation;
- c) *Minimum Fund Balances*, representing 15% of their "salaries and related charges budget", should be maintained by each Unit and by the Offices of the General Secretariat, except that, if a Unit or Office goes over budget it may draw on these minimum funds, but must restore them to the agreed level during the ensuing year. (Note: Initially the Minimum Funds for the General Secretariat will have to come from the General (Operating) Fund of the Council. Thereafter Minimum Funds would need to be "topped up" each year by budgeted transfer to maintain them at the level required);
- d) *General Fund Balances* should be maintained by Units and by the Offices of the General Secretariat and should be available for the use of the Unit or Office in ensuing years according to the following guidelines:
 - i. Funds can be used for Unit-wide core programmes which are consistent with the Unit's priorities and work;
 - ii. In such cases, these funds should contribute to longer term plans (2,3 or 4 years) for carrying out the work of the Unit;
 - iii. The allocation of these funds shall be done in consultation with the appropriate representatives of the Unit Commission and should be included in the Unit budget as submitted to the Finance Sub-Committee;
 - iv. Such funds shall not be used to begin new programme initiatives unless the Finance Sub-Committee gives specific permission;
 - v. Such funds shall not be used to support staff positions, with the exception of short term consultancies. (Note: New staff positions, i.e. in addition to the Unit's agreed allocation of a total staff of 256 FTEs, shall be approved only when secured funding for the term of a contract is assured and then this is approved as part of the regular operating budget and the decision-making process for staff posts);
- e) An *Emergency Reserve* is held, at a level agreed by the Finance Sub-committee, "to be used (by decision of the Council's Officers) only in the event of a major crisis which threatens in whole or in part the continuation of the WCC's work.

- f) An *Exchange Equalisation Reserve* is held, at a level agreed by the Finance Sub-Committee, for the specific purpose of guarding against major currency exchange crises and will be used to "top up" income if rates fall below those budgeted;
- g) A *General Reserve* is held, at a level agreed by the Finance Sub-Committee, which may be used from time to time (by decision of the Executive Committee) for special purposes, as long as it is restored to the agreed level as soon as possible.

7. *New accounting practices*

In the period since Central Committee last met, a major review of the WCC's Funds and Accounting Practices had taken place and a comprehensive report was submitted to and approved by the Executive Committee in March 1993.

The main fact which emerged was that much of the WCC's "programmatic activities" did not go through the Swiss franc Operating Budget (which is approved and monitored by the Finance Committees of the governing bodies), but through "Project and Trust Funds" in US dollars, controlled by the Units. Although properly accounted for and audited, these funds have not been under the control of the Finance Committees and the way they have been shown in the Financial Reports has not in fact given a full picture of the Council's programmatic work.

Very few of these "Project and Trust Funds" were related to specific projects or third party trusts, but were really programmatic activities of the Council. The recommendations approved by the Executive Committee were as follows:

- a) that the accounts structure be revised to a three tier presentation showing General (Operating) Accounts, Activities (Programmatic) Accounts and Specific Project Accounts;
- b) that in future WCC accounts should be presented in one currency, namely the Swiss franc (whilst maintaining the ability to work in and pay out in a multitude of currencies as required);
- c) that the Finance Sub-committee continue to keep in review the question of shared or redistributed costs, bringing recommendations for changes in policy whenever appropriate; (see below)
- d) that the Finance Sub-committee be asked to bring recommendations on the use of operating balances and reserves, whilst ensuring that the Council always maintains adequate resources to ensure financial liquidity and to cover at least three months operating expenses in a crisis; (see above)
- e) that the overall responsibility of the Central Committee and its Finance Committee for all the finances and budgets of the Council be reaffirmed, whilst authorising Unit Commissions to take responsibility for detailed planning and policy on the funding of programmatic activities and projects within the overall policies and budgets approved by the Central Committee;
- f) that the 1992 Financial Report and Accounts be presented to the Executive Committee in September 1993, taking into account the new structure of the

Council and, as far as possible, the new accounting policies contained in the report.

8. *The MICAH project*

The Council's accounting hardware, a Hewlett-Packard mini-mainframe computer, with a purpose-built accounting package, in use for many years, was no longer adequate for present day requirements. The change in accounting practice (above) had given opportunity to update the equipment and software. The project was named *MICAH*. A firm of consultants (Computer and Business Solutions) was selected which, after full research into the Council's needs, recommended that a new accounting package (a Swedish product called *Scala*) be employed. This was being installed on the Council's existing PC Network, introduced in 1992.

After a period of staff training, *MICAH* became operational at the beginning of January 1994, so the 1994 accounts will be in the new form. The WCC's auditors, KPMG (reappointed by the Executive in September 1993), were fully involved in the selection of the software and the monitoring of the project and will make sure they are satisfied with the system and its security. Substantial improvements in accounting efficiency and reporting are envisaged and there will be some cost saving when it is fully operational, not least by discarding the HP computer. The cost of the consultancy and the software will be largely covered by reserves built up for the replacement of the old system. An extension of the project later in the year will equip the Council with a new database with many applications.

9. *"New style 1994 budget"*

This was provided for illustrative purposes as an attempt by the Unit Finance Officers and finance staff to show the 1994 budget in the new form. The programmatic activity of the Units represents about Sfr 95m of the Council's total turnover of some Sfr 137m anticipated in 1994.

10. *Shared or redistributed costs*

As requested by the Executive Committee in March 1993 (see above), a review of *shared costs* - a matter which had been causing problems internally and with donors for some years - was undertaken by a Staff Finance Consultation in November. A document setting out the issues and process was considered by the Executive Committee in January 1994 and the following proposals were approved:

- a) There are three kinds of basic, non-programme costs for the Council:
 - i. the management of the organisation - the General Secretariat, the Governing Bodies (including the Conference Office and Assembly Reserve);
 - ii. the infrastructure costs, shared by all within the House (Central Services, Personnel, Finance, Computers and Income Development);
 - iii the services the organisation is required to provide as a service to its constituency (Publications, the Ecumenical Library, the Language Service).

- b) For Units and donors to perceive the system as fair, there needs to be real control on the nature and level of provision on these various costs in the light of limited resources. This was identified as one of the major problems in the current "redistribution" system. The SEG has agreed to undertake a review of certain of these costs during the next year if, in the light of further discussion, it considers this necessary.
- c) Consideration was given as to how these basic costs should be paid for, recognising that undesignated income (UDI) is insufficient to cover all such costs and also to pay for programmatic work, particularly in Unit I for which designated income is difficult to find. As a principle it was agreed that the management and infrastructure costs can properly be redistributed, providing they are carefully monitored by a body including representatives of those contributing to the costs.
- d) It was agreed that the current basis for redistribution is too complicated and not altogether fair, taking no account of a Unit's resources. On the other hand it was felt that it would be unfair to adopt a method based on financial "turnover". An arbitrary method would also be unacceptable. A simple, fixed basis, which did not vary once agreed and which was completely transparent, would be preferable. On the principles laid down in c) above it was agreed that the following would be a fair basis:

PROPOSED NEW BASIS FOR REDISTRIBUTION - the management and infrastructure costs should be shared between the four Units and the Offices of Relationships and Communications (treated together as a fifth unit for this purpose) on the basis of four dividers:

- i. based on full time equivalents (FTEs) budgeted for in the budget year (even if not in place) - the costs of Personnel and Salaries, the Library and CIS (Computer Information Services);
- ii. based on the number of offices on January 1 in the budget year (even if not in use, but allocated to the Unit) - Central Services;
- iii. based on "turnover" (i.e. total expenses budget for the year) - Finance and OICD;
- iv. based on equal division between the four programme Units (i.e. not including the Offices) - General Secretariat (core) and Governing Bodies (including Conference Office and Assembly Reserve).

Note 1. The cost of the Offices of Relationships and Communications and the shortfall on Unit I would be charged to UDI.

Note 2. Unless and until different arrangements are made, charges to other organisations in the House would be on the current (1993) basis agreed with the House Committee.

Note 3. There would be no charging of shared costs to those offices and sections which were being redistributed.

Note 4. A policy needs to be developed (with the House Committee where appropriate) for cases where redistribution results in a sector ending the year with a surplus - should it be retained as a balance or returned to Units? what about a genuine deficit?

Subsequently it was found that the proposed basis would slightly increase the overall budget deficit for 1994. The Units did not wish to depart from their proposal (above),

since they believe it to be fair and workable in the long term. Units II, III and IV have therefore agreed to contribute from their Unit funds up to Sfr 300,000 towards any shortfall in UDI in 1994. They will consider continuing such an arrangement in subsequent years on a reducing scale in the hope that UDI will increase and that the dependent sectors will also be able to generate their own funding to relieve the shortfall.

The Executive Committee welcomed these proposals, which indicated that the Units had come to a common mind and were prepared to take their fair share in the Council's central costs. It therefore agreed that, from 1 January 1994, redistribution of management and infrastructure costs be on the basis set out in paragraph d) above, on the understanding that Units II, III and IV each contribute from their Unit funds up to SFr 300,000 towards any shortfall in UDI in 1994. It also requested staff to review the operation of the new basis for redistribution in the light of experience and report to the Executive Committee at its first meeting in 1995.

11. *Income Development*

At its meeting in August 1992, the Central Committee approved an income development strategy document *Providing the Resources* (CC Minutes 1992, Appendix IX, p.171-ff), and asked to be kept informed of developments, particularly those relating to member church contributions (undesignated income/UDI).

Mr Günther Rath, Director of OICD (Office for Income Coordination and Development) reported to Central Committee on income and donor trends:

Membership contributions: In spite of economic difficulties in many countries, there are positive signs that member churches are willing to commit themselves to a greater degree to the payment of membership fees. But the decline of undesignated income in real terms, which has prevailed for many years, still needs to be reversed. Contributions may also be made in kind: when a member church hosts a WCC meeting, or if conference costs are borne by one church for delegates from another.

In terms of income for 1994 it was suggested that losses in receipts from US and Canadian member churches would be compensated for by a stronger financial commitment from member churches and church-related agencies in parts of Europe. However, only if there were an increase in the overall support for the WCC from member churches - about half of which made no contribution in 1992 - would the equilibrium line in 1994 be reached. Mr Rath asked Central Committee members to encourage their own churches to contribute to the WCC.

Income for specific purposes: As unit programmes are developed and priorities articulated, the constituency is in a better position to understand, participate in and contribute to the various endeavours of the Units. This also makes it easier for OICD to formulate annual requests to churches and donor agencies. Reporting requirements and systematic approaches are under review in collaboration with WCC partners. Mr

Rath had participated in Unit meetings, thus enabling OICD to communicate the particular needs of specific programmes to potential donors more effectively. OICD had successfully assisted in raising funds for a number of specific programmes.

Progress had been achieved in the **coordination of fund-raising**. With the help of the computer system, communication between the Units and OICD had been improved, with more clarity on what was expected in terms of fund-raising by the Units, and the specific tasks of OICD. The improved version of the Resource Sharing Book 1994 was the result of joint efforts between OICD and the Units as well as the General Secretariat. Coordination had also been increased between the OCER and OICD.

Communication and advocacy: The OICD brochure *Programmes and Finances 1994* was a first indication of how programme priorities and financial needs can be communicated to friends of the ecumenical family in a comprehensive way.

OICD had made numerous contacts during 1993 with member churches, national and regional councils, agencies, government departments, foundations and individuals in Asia, Europe and North America. From the point of view of income cultivation, direct contacts are necessary to keep member churches informed of programme changes and needs.

Special Funding was sought for the **Faith and Order World Conference (1993)** and the **Ecumenical Global Gathering of Youth and Students (1993)**. Reports from the respective Finance Officers show that both conferences have kept within their means, with expenditure being covered by income.

- Some funding was still required for the **Mid-Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women**.

- Funds would soon need to be sought for the **WCC Eighth Assembly**. Initial calculations project a total requirement of approximately Sfr 14 million taking into account a 4% annual inflation rate. OICD had already indicated to the member churches that it would be wise to make budgetary provision for this forthcoming Assembly request.

- A separate request was expected for special funding for the **1996/7 World Conference on Mission and Evangelism**.

The Finance Committee received a report from Dr Pennybacker on the Ecumenical Development Initiative (EDI), a joint undertaking with the NCCCUSA, and on the launching in June 1993 of the Archbishop Iakovos Endowment Fund. A consultation for church leaders in NE Asia took place in Hong Kong in May 1993 on the ecumenical sharing of resources, which showed that the building of relationships and confidence as a foundation for new sources of income would take time; patience and hard work would be required before concrete financial results may be expected.

The Executive Committee had authorised the Director of OICD and the Assistant General Secretary for Finance and Administration to call a small Consultation on

Income Development and Finance, to include representatives from donor churches and agencies with advisers from other regions, to review the financial situation of the Council in general and to advise specifically on membership contributions (undesignated income), problems relating to the shortage of UDI, and the need to redistribute costs.

It was the belief of the Finance Committee that the Council, having established a degree of short term financial stability, must now concentrate on building up a long-term funding base for the maintenance and development of the WCC's programmatic activities and, in particular, to increase the level of member church contributions (UDI) to fund core activities and to give the Central Committee more flexibility in new work. It asked that the Executive Committee and staff pursue the strategy outlined in *Providing the Resources*.

The Finance Committee recommended:

that the priority for the coming period be to build up a long term funding base for the maintenance and development of the Council's work and, in particular, to increase the level of member church contributions (UDI) in accordance with the strategy outlined in "Providing the Resources" approved in 1992.

The Central Committee **agreed**.

12. *Other work*

The Finance Committee received a report of the ongoing work of the Finance Sub-committee of the Executive Committee and the finance staff. It noted the reports of the Audit Committee and the Investment Advisory Group and commended those concerned for the excellent performance of the investment portfolios and the gains made on forward currency transactions.

13. *WCC Retirement Fund*

The Central Committee was requested to appoint its four representatives to serve on the Retirement Fund Board for the next three years. The Finance Committee *recommended*:

that the present members - Prof. Anne-Marie Aagaard, Mr John Briggs and Ms Birgitta Rantakari - be reappointed to serve on the Retirement Fund Board for three years, together with Ms Adrienne Reber, the pensioners' nominee.

The Central Committee **agreed**.

14. *Conclusion*

The Finance Committee was pleased to be able to present a positive report to the Central Committee: considerable progress had been made since its first meeting in September 1991. It asked for the continuing support of Central Committee members in achieving its top priority - the development of adequate financial resources for the Council's work on into the 21st Century.

In her closing remarks, Ms Rantakari referred to the fact that major renovations were in process both at the Ecumenical Centre and at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey. A block of 50 apartments near the Ecumenical Centre, many of which would be available to accommodate WCC staff, was nearing completion.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms Rantakari expressed gratitude for the work of the Finance staff which has resulted in the improved situation and a positive attitude towards the WCC's financial future.

The Central Committee received the report of the Finance Committee with appreciation.

REPORT OF THE BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

At an early session, Dr Aaron Tolen, moderator of the By-Laws Committee, presented a preliminary report. He reminded Central Committee that, at its meeting in August 1992 (minutes p.79-80), it had appointed a sub-committee (Ms Jarjour, Dr Love, Ms Mapanao, Bishop Rogerson, and Dr Tsetsis, with himself as moderator, together with OKR Arnold, Mr Park Jong Wha and Mr Briggs as consultants, and Mr Davies as secretary) to consider the changes required in order to reflect the new structure of the Council in constitutional terms. In some cases by-laws were no longer needed, while in others some adaptation was necessary.

The sub-committee had met twice; in addition, wider consultation had taken place with the General Secretary, representatives of the programme units and of the specialised units.

The general conclusions reached can be summarised as follows:

1. The Committee felt that its work should be seen in the context of **the whole constitutional framework of the Council**. The Central Committee had already revised the rules following the restructuring and the Committee had therefore worked on the more detailed provisions for the Units and "specialised activities" arising out of the work of the Advisory Group, as approved by the Central Committee in 1991.
2. The Committee considered **two alternative approaches**. One was the "radical approach", maintaining that by-laws as formerly understood were not required in the new structure, but rather a provision should be made in the regulations governing the Units to safeguard essential elements of past agreements, particularly as they affect relationships outside the membership of the Council. The other was the "cosmetic approach", which maintained that, assuming that historical structures must be preserved, existing by-laws should be retained with only minimal amendment to fit in with the new structure. After careful consultation, the Committee accepted that certain elements of the Council's activities did require special regulatory provisions for historic, relational or practical reasons, though it felt that it was the actual

programmatic activity which required safeguarding, not necessarily the structures under which these have traditionally been carried out.

3. It worked on the assumption that there ought to be a **common framework of regulations for the work of the four new Units** providing a basic, minimum structure. As far as possible there should be consistency in terminology and ways of working, while allowing flexibility to enable Units to carry out their work within the overall policies, rules and regulations approved by Central Committee.
4. The Unit Committees should be free to adopt **working guidelines** for the detailed regulation of the Unit's affairs. Internal arrangements should be contained in these guidelines and not in the official regulations.
5. The WCC Rules (V.5 [d]) provide for the setting up of "**Boards for specialised Units**". In considering the special needs of certain parts of the Council's activities (e.g. Faith and Order, the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, and International Affairs) it was felt that use should be made of this provision to set up "Boards" (i.e. "Standing Working Groups") where this was considered necessary.
6. **By-laws** should be set out and approved for the regulation of specialised activities where necessary.
7. The Central Committee should have power not only to approve **amendments to by-laws**, but to initiate changes when appropriate.
8. It was felt essential to emphasise the **hierarchy of authority** in the Council's constitutional instruments. The Constitution and Rules have precedence over regulations and by-laws. In turn the Unit regulations have precedence over working guidelines or the by-laws of specialised activities.
9. **The role of Commissions is advisory** to the Central Committee through the Unit Committees.
10. There was a strong desire to standardise **nomenclature**. For example, the title "Director" should be reserved for the Executive Directors of the Units and for heads of certain specified sections in the General Secretariat (e.g. Communications, Personnel, the Library) and for the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. Any exceptions approved by the General Secretary should be included in Unit working guidelines and not in regulations or by-laws.

Dr Tolen explained that a draft of the proposed revised by-laws had been circulated to members of Central Committee prior to this meeting, and they were invited to discuss these in the Unit Committees insofar as they relate to the work of the respective Unit. Any comments they wished to make would then be shared with a small group comprising himself, one of the Officers together with Mr Davies, who would review them and - at a later session - recommend any amendments necessary. Matters outside the mandate of the By-Laws Committee would not be accepted, and some items would be referred to those who will deal with a review of the new structure in due time.

The Central Committee would be invited to receive the By-Laws Committee's report and to approve the new texts proposed. The final version however could only be ratified in September 1995 after the section on Faith and Order had been ratified by its own decision-making structures.

In addition, the Central Committee may request a review of the working guidelines for the Rules of Debate. Once the process is completed, a reference booklet would be published.

It was **agreed** to refer the report for consideration by the Unit Committees.

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At a later session, Dr Tolen presented a supplementary report from the By-Laws Committee. A number of suggestions for amendment had been received which had been taken into consideration in the revised proposal now before Central Committee.

Several amendments or re-wordings to the original text were **agreed**; these have been incorporated in the final version (Appendix IV).

One amendment gave rise to considerable discussion: namely, that the proposed title of "coordinator" for Faith and Order be changed back to "director". In the restructuring it was envisaged that the former sub-units would disappear together with the use of "director". The new structure retained only the four Unit Directors, certain specified non-programme positions in the General Secretariat, and the Ecumenical Institute Bossey. All other programme streams had accepted this ruling, and it was felt that retaining the title for the stream on Faith and Order was inconsistent with the new structure.

Bishop Rogerson urged that "director" should continue to be used, not only because of long tradition in the WCC but on the basis of its usage in Faith and Order work worldwide beyond the Council itself.

Fr Kishkovsky pointed out that the Unit I Committee had voted in favour of using "director" for the senior staff position in Faith and Order. This did not mean any lack of support for the importance of coordination and coherence in the work of the Units, but a change in title would not necessarily produce this. Further, we must consider not only the role of Faith and Order in the Council, but also its role in the life of the churches. At this time of significant ecumenical difficulties in some churches, and remembering that some non-WCC members belong to Faith and Order, he urged that "director" be preserved.

Dr Tolen responded that there had been no intention to change the status of the senior staff person of Faith and Order. The Committee wanted to make clear that there was no difference in responsibilities involved, but in line with the usage in other Programme Units, it had selected the title "coordinator".

Dr Love, a member of the By-Laws Committee, pointed out that the original by-laws of Faith and Order did not specify the title of the senior staff person. She felt it important to have some flexibility with regard to specific understandings in the Units and

specialised groups, but some quite substantive exceptions had already been made for this Commission, and she thought this demand was unwarranted.

Msgr Radano believed that the term "coordinator" was more suited to the task of the Unit Director who should indeed coordinate the work of the different streams of the Unit. Faith and Order was concerned with the difficult theological world of bilateral and multilateral dialogues and does need to give direction to the work.

The Central Committee voted in favour of retaining the title "director", by 47 votes, with 27 votes against and 4 abstentions.

In the ensuing discussion, Bishop Jonson, who had been involved in the restructuring process, reminded Central Committee that one of the overarching goals of that process had been that full responsibility for direction, programme, staffing, etc. should rest with Central Committee. He feared that the decisions to be made about the by-laws indicated a tendency to retreat from this principle. He pleaded that when the process for reviewing the new structure was set up, the implications of these by-laws for the long term perspective in relation to the goals set for the new structure should be studied carefully.

Dr Page wondered about the function of those members of Central Committee who also serve on Unit Commissions. In approving these by-laws, the role of the Unit Committees had been sharpened, as had the symbolic role of Commission moderators in mediating between Commission and Committee. But this would appear to give less rationale for the presence of the five members of Central Committee who are on both Commission and Unit Committee - no specific role is laid down for them.

Dr Tolen affirmed that the By-Laws Committee wanted to ensure that the Central Committee did indeed continue to be the main decision-making body. He did not think there was any implication that a Central Committee member's presence on a Commission was any less important because no specific responsibility was assigned; it was assumed they would also help interpret the Commission's views to the Unit Committee and to Central Committee.

Voting in favour of the recommendations by the By-Laws Committee, the Central Committee:

- *received* the report of the By-Laws Committee, noted the matters raised, and approved the proposals contained therein, as amended, (Appendix IV), except for the By-Laws for Faith and Order for which final approval would be sought from the Central Committee at its meeting in 1995;
- *asked* the Executive Committee to review the Working Guide to the Rules of Debate in the Central Committee and *authorised* it to recommend such revision as it considered appropriate;
- *noted* the matters raised in Section 4 "Other Concerns of the Committee" in

the Report of the By-Laws Committee, and *referred* them to the Executive Committee for consideration and, where appropriate, for action.

Dr Nababan, presiding, thanked the members of the By-Laws Committee for their work. Dr Crow also expressed appreciation for the care taken in carrying through the often difficult negotiations involved. He warned against any misinterpretation of the process as it continued, noting that the changes had been made by vote of Central Committee thus emphasising the intention of the by-laws that Central Committee is the decision-making body.

STAFFING AND NOMINATIONS REPORT

In a closed session on 26 January, Archbishop Keshishian, moderating, reminded members of Central Committee that the Executive Committee acts as the Staffing and Nominations Committee for Central Committee. He invited Dr Nababan to present the report.

I. Staffing Matters

Dr Nababan moved a recommendation from the Executive Committee that the Central Committee authorise the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointments and contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts or contract extensions.

A. Appointments

UNIT I - Unity and Renewal

- Rev. Thomas Fitzgerald (USA, Orthodox/Ecumenical Patriarchate [Eastern]) as Executive Director for four years from an agreed date
- Rev. Alan Falconer (UK, Church of Scotland [Reformed]) as Director, Faith and Order, for four years from an agreed date.

The Central Committee **agreed**, with two abstentions.

B. Contract Extension

General Secretariat

- Rev. Michael Davies (UK, United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom) Assistant General Secretary for Finance and Administration, for three years from 1 September 1995 (will complete 8 years' service) (retirement).

The Central Committee **agreed**.

C. The Central Committee **authorised** the Executive Committee to fill urgent vacancies that must be filled prior to the next meeting of Central Committee.

(Appointments and Contract Extensions approved by the Executive Committee can be found in the minutes of the Executive Committee, January 1994).

II. Membership of Executive Committee

At a later closed session, following a special closed session of the Executive, Dr Nababan reported that in consultation with the Methodist Church of Tonga and in order not to delay any longer the seating of a member from the Pacific the Executive recommended that Ms Valamotu Palu, who had earlier been appointed a member of the Central Committee, be appointed also a member of the Executive Committee, replacing Ms Taufatofua-Manu who was resigning.

The Central Committee **agreed**.

III. Membership of Assembly Planning Committee (APC)

Dr Nababan presented the list of names proposed by the Executive, noting that every effort had been made to achieve the required balances.

Mr Gill stressed the importance for the host churches to have some input to the preparations for the assembly, and proposed adding: "one person to be appointed by the NCC of the country in which the Eighth Assembly is to be held". Dr Raiser agreed with the intention of the motion. It had been the custom to involve a representative of the host country, and once a local organising committee had been formed this will be done. But the formal membership of APC is limited to members of Central Committee, being a sub-committee of it. Mr Gill was content with the assurance that the APC would coopt such a person, with the understanding that the host churches may indicate whom they would wish to have coopted.

Mr Lodberg pointed out that the quota of lay persons was mainly filled by women, while laymen were becoming less represented.

Ms Welch asked if consideration had been given to people with organisational experience, and whether there was any continuity with the previous APC. Dr Raiser said that most members of the last APC had not been present at Canberra as delegates. Efforts had been made to select persons who could make a contribution in organisational and content terms. Archbishop Keshishian was the only member of the former APC who is a member of the present Central Committee.

Dr Wilkens felt that Western and Central Europe were under-represented and asked that this imbalance be redressed. The General Secretary responded that changes already made

had resulted in this imbalance, but he warned against making the APC too large to function efficiently. Dr Wilkens moved "that an additional person from Western or Central Europe be included in the membership of the APC". The Central Committee **voted in favour** of this proposal; the person to be appointed by the Executive.

With this addition, the Central Committee **approved** the proposed membership of the Assembly Planning Committee as follows:

Bishop Jonas Jonson (Moderator)	M/O	W.Europe	Lutheran
Ms Margarita Neliubova	F/L	E.Europe	E.Orthodox
Metr. Dometian of Vidin	M/O	E.Europe	E.Orthodox
Ms Marion Best	F/L	N.America	United
Dr Charles Adams	M/O	N.America	Baptist
Ms Kathryn Bannister	F/L	N.America	Methodist
Very Rev. L. Kishkovsky	M/O	N.America	E.Orthodox
Rev. Violet Sampa Bredt	F/O	Africa	United
Ms Faith Mwondha	F/L	Africa	Anglican
Rev. David Mandeng	M/O	Africa	Presbyterian
Metr.Mar Greg.Ibrahim	M/O	M.East	O.Orthodox
Dr Constantin Patelos	M/L	M.East	E.Orthodox
Ms Khushnud Azariah	F/L	Asia	United
Ms Priyanka Mendis	F/L	Asia	Anglican
Dr Bert Supit	M/L	Asia	Reformed
Dr Park Jong Wha	M/O	Asia	Reformed
Rev. Ian Allsop	M/O	Asia	Disciples
Ms Tungane Williams	F/L	Pacific	Congregational
Bishop P.Ayres Mattos	M/O	L.America	Methodist
Rev. E.Farfán Figueroa	M/O	L.America	Pentecostal
Ms Violet Rhaburn	F/L	Caribbean	Methodist

IV. Membership of Assembly Worship Committee (AWC)

Dr Nababan introduced the list of membership proposed by the Executive, noting that the AWC was a sub-committee of the APC and thus accountable to it. This time it was proposed to include a number of animators in the membership from the beginning, rather than adding these at a later stage. Dr Tsetsis reiterated what he had said in the Executive Committee, namely that care be taken to avoid the animators becoming the "main attraction" of the worship as has happened at some ecumenical gatherings; their task is to assist the celebrant.

Mr Lodberg noted once again a lack of laymen, with only two names proposed, and said he would abstain from voting to record his regret about this imbalance. He appealed to the Orthodox to consider appointing lay persons sometimes. Ms Abraham pointed out that the young people were all women; where were the

male youth? Dr Raiser said that any suggestions of names in this category would be welcomed.

Dr Nababan moved that the proposed membership be approved, with the understanding that one person from the Pacific and one with Pentecostal/Charismatic background would be appointed by the Executive Committee in order to meet the required balances. A person to be identified by the local organising committee as the primary contact person for worship would become a member of the AWC ex-officio.

The Central Committee **approved** the membership as follows:

Rev. Dorothy McMahon (Moderator)	F/O	Asia	United
Mr I-to Loh	M/L	Asia	Presbyterian
Rev. Thomas Thangaraj	M/O	Asia	United
Deacon Wolde G. Demthe	M/O	Africa	O.Orthodox
Rev. Nagula Kathindi	F/O	Africa	Anglican
Dr James Waithaka	M/O	Africa	Independent
Ms Gwen Cashmore	F/L	W.Europe	Anglican
Sister Heidi (Wäfler)	F/L	W.Europe	Reformed
Dr Anne Tveter	F/L	W.Europe	Lutheran
Fr. Milos Vesin	M/O	E.Europe	E.Orthodox
Fr. Basil Karayannis	M/O	M.East	E.Orthodox
Ms Simei Monteiro	F/L	L.America	Methodist
Fr. Pascal Jordan	M/O	Caribbean	Roman Catholic
Rev. Helen Pearson	F/O	N.America	United
Dr Paul Meyendorff	M/L	N.America	E.Orthodox

V. Reappointment of the Executive Committee

The General Secretary indicated that, according to Rule V 1.b), it was necessary for Central Committee to reappoint the Executive Committee. Members would recall the intensive discussion about the proposal for rotation of membership of the Executive, the final result being a clear stance against the proposal.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of reappointing the present members of the Executive Committee to serve for the period until September 1995.

STATEMENT REGARDING THE SITE OF THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

During the closing session, the General Secretary reported that, arising from the press conference following the decision to choose Harare as the site of the Eighth Assembly, concern had been expressed by some members of Central

Committee based on press reports about alleged harassment of homosexuals by police in Harare, Zimbabwe. He made the following statement:

"On returning to Geneva I shall seek to obtain from the Minister of Home Affairs of the Government of Zimbabwe an official response and eventual clarification concerning these reports. The General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches has offered his support. Before having ascertained the facts I cannot responsibly comment any further.

"After the decision by Central Committee in favour of Harare as the site for the Eighth Assembly of the WCC, I shall now seek the necessary assurances from the Government of Zimbabwe regarding the entry and safety of all *bona fide* participants of the assembly, as well as regarding the freedom of the assembly in setting its agenda and in expressing its mind.

"Given the deep division within this Central Committee and among member churches about theological and ethical issues of human sexuality and sexual orientation, and in the absence of a clear language to arrive at a common understanding of what the most problematic issues are, I consider it my responsibility to make every effort to maintain our fellowship in the face of sharp differences of conviction and to manifest pastoral sensitivity. I therefore ask all to refrain from urging the WCC to take positions on these issues for which it is not yet responsibly prepared."

The Central Committee **endorsed** this statement by the General Secretary.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The General Secretary reminded Central Committee that it had already accepted an invitation by the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. to hold its next meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, USA. He affirmed that other member churches of the WCC in the US wished to associate themselves with this invitation.

On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the following dates were accepted, exclusive of travel:

1994	14-19 September	Executive Committee	Bucharest, Romania
1995	7-13 February	Executive Committee	Geneva
	19-20 September	Executive Committee	Nashville, Tenn. USA
	21-29 September	Central Committee	Nashville, Tenn. USA
1996	6-10 March	Executive Committee	Pacific
	10-11 September	Executive Committee	Cyprus
	12-20 September	Central Committee	Cyprus

CLOSING ACTIONS

I. Expressions of Thanks

On behalf of the Officers, the Moderator expressed thanks and appreciation to the members of Central Committee and to all who had attended this meeting in various capacities for their active participation in the deliberations and actions of the Committee. He also thanked those who had presided at deliberative sessions, the moderators and vice-moderators of Unit and GS Committees, and those who had served on other committees and small groups.

The Moderator expressed gratitude to the General Secretary, his Deputies, the Assistant General Secretary, and the Assistant to the General Secretary. He also took the opportunity to give particular recognition to three long-serving staff members who would be leaving the Council during the coming year: Ms Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Prof. Ion Bria, and Dr Günther Gassmann.

Both the Moderator and the General Secretary expressed warm thanks to the members of the South African Preparatory Committee and their moderator, Ms Virginia Gcabashe, as well as to staff members of the South African Council of Churches for dealing with the manifold tasks involved in organising such a meeting.

Dr Raiser gave special thanks to Ms Brigalia Bam and Mr Dan Vaughan, without whose care, sensitivity, determination and courage, this occasion would not have been possible. Gifts were presented to them both on behalf of the Central Committee as a token of affection and gratitude, accompanied by applause.

Dr Raiser also wished to record his thanks to Rev. Mvume Dandala and staff of the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg for an unforgettable Opening Service.

Thanks were expressed too to the management and personnel of the Eskom Centre, especially to the ladies in the various houses where participants had been accommodated, and to the dining room staff.

The General Secretary concluded by thanking staff colleagues for all they had done to ensure the smooth running of the meeting:

Conference Secretary - Nan Braunschweiger;
 the team of Stewards, led by Anu Talvivaara;
 the team of Interpreters and Translators, coordinated by Joan Reilly and Ada Silenzi;
 interpretation equipment - Andrée d'Alessandri and Robert Equey;

Documentation - Joan Cambitsis and Tom Best;
 Printing - Daniel Moreillon and Abie Mokoena;
 the Typing Pool coordinated by Joan Haworth;
 Computer links - David Pozzi-Johnson, Catherine Inoubli and stewards;
 Preparatory work on Eighth Assembly sites - Bill Perkins;
 Preparation of daily worship - Evelyn Appiah, John Doom, Joan Geuss, Terry MacArthur, Elizabeth Salter;
 Coordination of Sunday church visits - Tarek Mitri, Jean Stromberg and Hubert van Beek, together with Bp Peter Storey of SACC;
 Raptim Travel - Jean-Daniel Ducret;
 Finance and cash officer - Yasmina Lebouachera;
 Information Desk - Helga Rollman, Gudrun Smith, Margot Wahl, Brigitte Constant;
 Minute takers - Rosemary Green assisted by Sheila Ray;
 Day by Day - Libby Visinand;
 Bookshop - Heather Stunt;
 Photo service - Peter Williams;
 Meeting room coordination - Malle Niilus and Bob Scott;
 Recordings - Gilbert Cudré-Mauroux.

On behalf of Central Committee, Ms Birgitta Rantakari expressed appreciation for the excellent leadership provided by the Officers and the good atmosphere they had created. With the restructuring process accomplished and the transition period over, the Council was now in a position to carry out the work it is supposed to do. There are three more Central Committee meetings before the next assembly and many challenges ahead, but with such leadership we can be confident as we look towards the future.

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The Moderator adjourned this session of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at 16.00 hrs on 28 January 1994.

II. Closing Worship

The Closing Worship service began in the plenary hall with a liturgy led by Central Committee members; Dr Janice Love preached the sermon. Participants then moved out of the auditorium to an altar placed in the open area for a Eucharist presided over by Rev. Elizabeth Welch and Rev. Michel Twagirayesu.

PARTICIPANTS

PRESIDIUM

Presidents

Bishop Vinton Anderson, African Methodist Episcopal Church, USA

Bishop Leslie Boseto, United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands

Mrs Priyanka Mendis, Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka

His Beatitude Parthenios, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, Egypt

Rev. Eunice Santana, Disciples of Christ, Puerto Rico

His Holiness Pope Shenouda, Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt

Dr Aaron Tolen, Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

OFFICERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Moderator

Archbishop Aram Keshishian, Armenian Apostolic Church (Cilicia), Lebanon

Vice-Moderators

Ephorus Dr Soritua A. E. Nababan, Batak Protestant Christian Church, Indonesia

Pastora Nélide Ritchie, Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina

General Secretary

Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany

MEMBERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Mrs Ruth Abraham, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

Dr Charles Adams, Progressive National Baptist Convention, USA

Ms Ahn Ju Hye, Korean Methodist Church

Rev. Levi Okang'a Akhura, African Church of the Holy Spirit, Kenya

Bishop Ambrosius of Joensuu, Orthodox Church of Finland

Rev. Andreas Anggui, Toraja Church, Indonesia

Metropolitan Athanasios (Papadopoulos) of Heliopolis and Theira, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Metropolitan Elias Audi, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

Bishop Paulo Ayres Mattos, Methodist Church in Brazil
 Mrs Khushnud Azariah, Church of Pakistan
 Mrs Kathryn Bannister, United Methodist Church, USA
 Barbara Bazett, Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of
 Friends
 Mrs Marion Best, United Church of Canada
 Pasteur Martin Beukenhorst, United Protestant Church of Belgium
 Prof. Dr André Birmele, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession
 of Alsace and Lorraine, France
 Rev. Dr Karel Blei, Netherlands Reformed Church
 Sra Cristina Bösenberg, Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Argentina
 Archbishop Nerses Bozabalian, Armenian Apostolic Church (Etchmiadzin)
 Mr John Briggs, Baptist Union of Great Britain
 Rt Rev. Björn Bue, Church of Norway
 Mr Ari Carvalho, United Methodist Church, USA
 Metropolitan Chrysanthos of Limassol, Church of Cyprus
 Rev. Prof. Evanilza de Barros Correia, Episcopal Church of Brazil
 Rev. Dr Paul A. Crow, Jr., Disciples of Christ, USA
 Bishop Dr Kálmán Csiha, Reformed Church of Romania
 Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina, Romanian Orthodox Church
 Ms Beatrice Danquah, Presbyterian Church of Ghana
 Mrs Rosemary Davies-Izard, Methodist Church, UK
 Mr Andrew Mbugo Elisa, Episcopal Church of the Sudan
 Frau Edeltraud Engel, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany
 Bishop Dr Klaus Engelhardt, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany
 Pastor Erasmo Farfan Figueroa, Pentecostal Mission Church, Chile
 Rev. Wali Fejo, Uniting Church of Australia
 Mrs Olga Ganaba, Russian Orthodox Church
 Dr Maxine Garrett, Moravian Church (Northern Province), USA
 Mrs Virginia Gcabashe, Methodist Church of Southern Africa
 Prof. Dr Milan Gerka, Orthodox Church of Slovakia, Slovak Republic
 Bishop Hans Gerny, Old Catholic Church of Switzerland
 Rt Rev. Drexel Gomez, Church of the Province of the West Indies
 (Anglican), Bahamas
 Mrs Makiko Hirata, United Church of Christ in Japan
 Mr Béalo Houmbouy, Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty
 Islands
 Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, Syrian Orthodox
 Patriarchate of Antioch
 Mrs Maryon Jägers, Church of England, (Netherlands)
 Mrs Rosangela Jarjour, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
 Dr Mac Charles Jones, National Baptist Convention of America, USA
 Rt Rev. Jonas Jonson, Church of Sweden
 Rev. Dr Margot Kässmann, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany
 Mrs Nagula Kathindi, Church of the Province of Southern Africa
 (Anglican)

Citoyen Tusange Katonia, Church of Christ in Zaire - Episcopal Baptist Community

Rev. Edea Kidu, United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands

Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, Russian Orthodox Church

Mr Dimitre Kirov, Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, Orthodox Church in America

Ms Wsiewolod Konach, Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Poland

Prof. George Koshy, Church of South India

Dr Günter Krusche, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany

Dr Birgitta Larsson, Church of Sweden

Dr Shirley Liddell, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, USA

Dr Peter Lodberg, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark

Dr Janice Love, United Methodist Church, USA

Mrs Jan Malpas, Anglican Church of Australia

Rev. Dr David Mandeng Ma Mbeleg, Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

Mrs Nadeje Mandysova, Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Czech Rep.

Miss Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo, United Church of Christ in the Philippines

Rev. Hector Mendez, Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba

Rev. Dr Donald Miller, Church of the Brethren, USA

Rev. Dr A. Matitsoane Moseme, Lesotho Evangelical Church

Dr med. Irmela Müller-Stöver, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany

Rev. Dr Kingsley Muttiah, Methodist Church, Sri Lanka

Rt Rev. John Neill, Church of Ireland

Ms Margarita Neliubova, Russian Orthodox Church

Bishop Nifon of Ploiesti, Romanian Orthodox Church

Mrs Prakai Nontawasee, Church of Christ in Thailand

Frau Christine Oettel, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany

Rt Rev. Dr Henry Okullu, Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican)

Bishop Amos Omodunbi, Methodist Church, Nigeria

Rev. Dr Ruth Page, Church of Scotland

Most Rev. Tito Pasco, Philippine Independent Church

Prof. Dr Constantine Patelos, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, Greece

Rev. Rachel Paulin, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Most Rev. Michael Peers, Anglican Church of Canada

Archpriest Viktor Petliuchenko, Russian Orthodox Church

Dr Elsie Philip, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, India

Pasteur Jean Baptiste Rakotomaro, Eglise luthérienne malgache

Ms V. R. Vidhya Rani, United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India

Mrs Birgitta Rantakari, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland

Mrs Violet Rhaburn, Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, Panama

Rt Rev. Barry Rogerson, Church of England, UK

Prof. John Romanides, Church of Greece

Rev. Dr William Rusch, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Pastor José da Silveira Salvador, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of
 Portugal
 Pastor Carlos Sanchez, Baptist Association of El Salvador
 Mrs Patricia Scoutas, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Australia
 Dr Nenevi Seddoh, Evangelical Church of Togo
 Bishop Serapion, Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt
 Rev. Dr Paul Sherry, United Church of Christ, USA
 Mrs Sri Winarti Soedjatmoko, East Java Christian Church, Indonesia
 Mr Harrys Sumbayak, Simalungun Protestant Christian Church, Indonesia
 Dr Bert Supit, Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa, Indonesia
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 Switzerland
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 Hegoumen Nestor Zhiliaev, Russian Orthodox Church

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Russian Orthodox Church	(24-28 January)
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Church of the Province of Nigeria (Anglican)	
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Ethiopian Orthodox Church	
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Msgr John Mutiso Mbinda	Roman Catholic Church (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)

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 Netherlands

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 Bishop Emre Camba - Unit II
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 Mr Steven Demolle - Unit II
 Fady El Zokm - Youth
 Mr Polynus Frederick - Youth
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 Dr James Andrews

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Dr Risto Cantell

Ms Lydia Chicwavaire
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Rev. Dr Robert Jones

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Rev. Zodwa Memela)

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
Evangelical-Lutheran Church of
Finland

Zimbabwe Council of Churches
Church of Sweden
National Baptist Convention USA,
Inc.

Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
Hong Kong Christian Council
AACC
AACC
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Church of Sweden
Religious Society of Friends, USA
Evang.Landeskirche Württemberg
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Prot. Church in Western Indonesia
Zimbabwe Council of Churches
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan
Community Churches, USA

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Ms Kerstin Weniger
Mr Moise Yonta

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THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ISSUES
AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

(* not present at this meeting)

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Ms Vidhya Rani

Bishop Jan Szarek

Bishop Melvin Talbert

* Dr Hesina Tetelepta

Dr Aaron Tolen

Dr Daniel Weiss

Mrs Tungane Williams

Substitutes:

Archimandrite F. Ashurkov

Rev. Douglas Fromm

Rev. David Gill

Rev. Caroline Pattiasina

Rt Rev. Jeffery Rowthorn

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Dr Nenevi Seddoh - Vice-Moderator

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Dr Charles Adams

Metr. Athanasios of Heliopolis

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* Rev. Dr Janos Viczian

Rev. Elizabeth Welch

Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilos

Hegoumen Nestor Zhiliaev

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Dr Heinz Rüegger

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Dr Fritz Erich Anhelm

Dr Faitala Talapusi

Dr Mary Tanner

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 * Metr. Chrysostomos of Peristerion
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 Drs Aukje Westra
 Rev. Maran Zau Yaw

Substitutes:

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 Rev. Klaus Wilkens

Unit Advisers:

Bishop Emre Camba
 Dr Sigrun Mogedal
 Landespf. Margarete Rust-Riedel

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 * Rev. Nove Valiaau
 * Pasteur Amos Zita

Substitutes:

Rev. George Lasebikan
 Ato Gebrekristos Makonnen
 Mr Petar Pejovic
 Ms Mary Um

Unit Advisers:

Mr Polynus Frederick
 Ms Thoko Mpumlwana
 Rev. Valamotu Palu
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 Dr Bert Supit
 Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis
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 Pasteur Michel Twagirayesu
 Rev. Angelique Walker-Smith

Unit Adviser:

Rev. Michael Taylor

Committee on Public Issues

Dr Aaron Tolen - Moderator
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 Rt Rev. Dr Henry Okullu
 * Prof. Dr Park Jong-Wha
 Rev. Eunice Santana
 Ms Patricia Scoutas
 Dr Bert Supit
 Bishop Melvin Talbert

Substitute:

Rev. Klaus Wilkens

(* not present at this meeting)

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO AFRICA

Introduction

The Central Committee last held a full meeting on the African continent in 1971 (Addis Ababa). At that time, only a decade after many African colonies of Belgium, Britain, France and Spain began to achieve independence, signs of instability and abuse of power by government authorities had grown already to troubling proportions.

In a statement on *Unity and Human Rights in Africa Today*, Central Committee attributed many of these trends to the legacy of colonial rule and to neo-colonial influences. The interference of rich and powerful foreign nations, it said, "offers the most serious threat to the stability and development of African nations, and makes the solution of the existing problems of tribalism and internal dissidence more difficult". These political, social and economic forces, it continued, "menace the aspirations of the African peoples for unity and for a human existence in full dignity and independence".

The Central Committee urged governments to respect and "support the efforts of the free African nations to attain and preserve their full self-determination, independence and unity", and it called upon the churches to "find a way to assist in a radical transformation of the concept of the interdependence among peoples through the creation of a new international ethos that recognises and respects Africa's determination to retrieve its lost identity as a regional centre of initiative."

At that moment, one of the first post-independence wars of major proportions to be fought in Africa was raging in Nigeria, in the secessionist region of Biafra. Fought mainly along ethnic lines, and heavily fuelled by foreign interests, this conflict had claimed centre stage in the global media. Church and other humanitarian agencies were mobilising massive amounts of material and financial aid to assist victims. The Central Committee described it as a war which was "engaging the whole African continent in a bitter and protracted struggle with the risk of a major world conflict".

The WCC Fifth Assembly (Nairobi, 1975) was exposed to the further deteriorating reality of Africa during a plenary on "African Challenge". Joe de Graft's play, *Muntu*, gave voice in a vivid and memorable way to the hopes and aspirations, but also the painful frustrations of Africa; the latter, through the portrayal of the emergence of a brutal ruler of an independent African state, easily recognisable, but not named, as Idi Amin.

The Assembly encouraged efforts of the churches to combat racism on the African continent through support for liberation movements against British, Portuguese and South African rule, and spoke strongly against collaboration with the apartheid regime of South Africa. But the Assembly's attention on public issues was sharply drawn away from Africa to the debate over the situations of human rights and religious liberty in the socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe.

Nearly two decades later, it is appropriate that the Central Committee give special attention to Africa as it meets on this continent. This would happen in several ways. The General Secretary would highlight the ways in which the Council has sought, especially during the past year, to intensify its support for the churches and ecumenical bodies of Africa in their difficult struggles for peace, democracy, human dignity and survival. The Unit III Committee would receive a detailed report on this Unit's efforts to implement the "Minute on Africa" adopted by the Executive Committee in March 1993, and to respond to urgent appeals for action by African members of Central Committee. Other Unit Committees would be reporting results of Council programmes to help meet human need, to develop deeper understandings of the causes of poverty, conflict and oppression in Africa, and to strengthen the African churches in their witness and service to the peoples of the continent.

The Africa of the 1990s

Sub-Sahara Africa today presents many, often contradictory faces to the world.

The economy: Africa possesses fabulous wealth, and some countries have been able to use it to create pockets of development with standards of living equivalent to or surpassing parts of Europe or North America. The gold and diamond mines of South Africa, the rich oil fields of Cabinda and Nigeria, the fertile lands of Kenya and Zimbabwe, the rich fishing grounds surrounding the whole continent, all witness to Africa's enormous potential.

[Africa provides over 90% of the world's diamonds, 70% of its gold, nearly one-third of its copper, a quarter of its uranium; its potential in other key minerals, including oil, is still undetermined.]

But it is abject poverty, not riches, which most characterises Africa today. The majority of those classified by the United Nations as "least developed countries" (LDCs), the poorest populations of the entire world are here. On virtually every scale by which social development and well-being are quantified – indices of literacy, health care, employment, housing, potable water supplies are examples – African nations rank at or near the bottom.

Enormous wealth and abject poverty are both characteristics of Africa. Why is so much of the wealth being drained to the rich countries of the North? Why is

the wealth which remains in Africa so unjustly distributed amongst its sons and daughters?

Natural and human disaster: A region of spectacular natural beauty and diversity, Africa is challenged today by accelerating attacks on the environment. Virtually uncontrolled population growth places unprecedented strains on nature's capacity to resist human incursions. Once again, poverty plays a central role. Forests and grazing lands are strained to the limit, contributing to a continuing process of desertification and environmental degradation.

Partly as a result of these conditions, but much more due to widespread political repression, wars and ethnic conflicts, refugees and migrants continue to grow in number throughout the continent, draining off scarce national resources, destabilising already fragile societies, and increasing the continent's overall vulnerability.

With poverty, massive migration and displacement of poor populations, and widespread illiteracy, come, invariably, massive health problems. In Africa today, the HIV/AIDS explosion continues at a pace which defies statistical quantification, complicated by all these factors, by ingrained patriarchal attitudes, and by the refusal of many Christian leaders to come to terms with the challenges posed by this pandemic to the overly simplistic notions of morality and human sexuality which tend to predominate in the churches.

War and peace: For centuries, outside powers have warred with one another for control over Africans' lands. But never, since the worst days of the slave trade, have so many lives been wasted as in the "proxy wars" fought between East and West in Africa in the years of the Cold War. It is not surprising, then, that with the thaw in international relations which began in 1989, when East and West, especially the USA and the USSR, decided to cooperate with UN efforts to achieve peace, Africa would be among those to benefit.

Remarkable progress was made toward resolving three of the most longstanding and debilitating conflicts of Africa. A peace accord was struck in Angola, independence for Namibia was realised, an end of apartheid in South Africa became possible, and a negotiated settlement ended the open civil war in Mozambique. This new recourse to negotiation as an alternative to escalating armed conflict had a rolling effect. In a number of other situations, negotiations got under way. New "civil society" movements emerged, demanding an end to government abuses and to dictatorial or authoritarian regimes. There was a clamour for democracy all around Africa, and it found echo abroad.

That clamour has not stopped. But many of the democratic processes it spawned have stumbled or collapsed altogether, as did the scheduled transition from military rule in Nigeria. Promising new beginnings, such as the agreement between the MPLA government of Angola and UNITA to hold popular elections

and abide by their results, have resulted in a return to bitter, fratricidal warfare with massive losses of human life, in no small part due to the continuing intervention of former Cold War allies of the parties.

Peace and war, reconstruction and destruction are all characteristics of Africa today. Why have the wars been allowed to continue? Who benefits from the wholesale slaughter of the sons and daughters of Africa?

The outside world's view of Africa, shaped by Western-controlled global news media, tends to be one of unqualified failure. The failure of peace accords in the Sudan and elsewhere, the mismanagement of the conflict in Somalia, the failure of popular movements to oust dictators, the inability of African governments to cope with the masses of African refugees driven across the expanse of the continent in unprecedented numbers; failure to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, to reverse the growing poverty of the masses, or to stem resurgent ethnic and tribal conflicts.

But, once again, this is not the only face of Africa. There are also the remarkable stories of Africans' successes in coping with their own problems in ways outsiders could never manage. In Somaliland, peace has been achieved by clan councils and village chiefs without external intervention. The fragile, yet still hopeful resolution of the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea; the Arusha Peace Accord, provide a ray of hope for Rwanda; the promise of new futures for Malawi and Madagascar in the East and Ghana in the West are cases in point; the efforts of African churches to serve refugees are but a few examples.

The capacity of African women to organise for change, for protection of the environment, for democracy shows the remarkable resilience of Africans in the face of adversity. Youth are again on the move all over the continent. New African non-governmental associations are being formed. People's movements are demanding and inspiring change. Namibia, Zimbabwe and other countries are overcoming the legacy of colonialism and giving a positive example of how racism can be overcome and new societies built for the good of all.

Understanding Africa

Africa is at once among the most studied and one of the least understood regions of the world.

By far the majority of those investigating the African reality are located in university faculties, specialised institutes, study centres, and other government-sponsored and private "think tanks" in Europe and North America. Many of these have rendered enormous service to African peoples and their nations. They have helped to preserve language and to record history. Some have especially valued African culture and sought to interpret it to others. Many have provided havens for some of the finest scholars of Africa who, often for political reasons, have been forced to flee their native countries.

Some of the most influential of these bodies, however, have been created to aid the imposition on Africa of values, social, political and economic structures, and modes of thinking - including religious ideas - which are alien to Africa and have often led to greater exploitation and instability. From both West and East, Cold War strategic interests and the bi-polar mentality which has characterized much post-World War II thinking have been thrust upon societies who had little at stake in these ideological struggles as framed by the superpowers. Some of these bodies, including ones linked with churches in the industrialised world, have adopted triumphalist attitudes out of their belief that Africans, for whatever reason, are not able to cope with the problems themselves. More than a few of these have the power and financial resources to impose their solutions, often through willing African collaborators.

It is well known that, for centuries, Africans have been denied the right to their own lands or to the free governance of their own sovereign nations. With the exception of the brief experience of assertive African self-rule following the first wave of independence in the 1960s, Africa has been constantly subject to the social, economic, political, military, and spiritual influence of external powers since the days of slavery.

Less frequently considered is the fact that post-independence efforts to develop indigenous academic and research capabilities have often been stymied both by the trends mentioned above, and by limited resources and the political instability which has disrupted academic and other institutions and forced many researchers into exile.

As a result, an African perspective on African issues has forever been difficult to obtain. This was among the objectives of the architects of the Organisation for African Unity, but for both external and internal reasons, African states have failed to put these ideals into practice. Efforts to develop African capacities to study and write about the histories and cultures of African peoples have produced still comparatively meagre results. Development of independent African theological ideas, after promising beginnings in the period after independence, has also faltered, and churches struggle harder than ever with the ideas and symbols of Christianity which contribute more to the further colonisation of the African mind than to its liberation.

African leaders at every level share responsibility for this sad state of affairs with those representing outside interests. They have too easily allied themselves with those interests out of avarice, and the pursuit of political and military power sufficient to any challenge of their personal or their families' positions. They have too often failed to set proper priorities, or to resist demands that they organise societies in ways which serve external interests more than the people governed. As a result, it could well be said that Africa has become incapable even of understanding itself. And this growing lack of self-understanding is a major impediment to autonomous, truly African development.

The admonition of the WCC Central Committee's 1971 statement cited above is even more relevant today than it was then. Governments around the world need to be urged again to respect and "support the efforts of the free African nations to attain and preserve their full self-determination, independence and unity". Churches must be reminded of their responsibility to "find a way to assist in a radical transformation of the concept of the interdependence among peoples through the creation of a new international ethos that recognises and respects Africa's determination to retrieve its lost identity as a regional centre of initiative".

The Democratisation of Africa

Nowhere is the need for such a new international ethos more apparent than in the area of governance of African societies.

External powers, many of which have judged Africans incapable of "modernity" and thus of governing their own affairs according to the "civilised" standards of the West, have recently taken up the cry of the times and begun to demand that the autocratic governments, despotic rulers and military dictatorships they helped establish and sustain over decades must now give way to new "democracies".

During the Cold War, the West often condemned one-party rule in independent Africa, yet all the while supporting it in practice according to its own perceived strategic and economic interests. The East was somewhat more consistent in echoing the rationales brought forward by African rulers to justify one-party rule, but it was seldom less self-interested.

The decade of the 1990s has brought growing pressure on African governments and/or rulers to don the formal attire of Western democracy as a pre-condition for continued economic and other aid and trade.

Various criteria have been set to measure the sincerity of moves to democracy. The tests African states must ordinarily meet today to be fully recognised by external powers and granted aid and credits through global financial institutions are three:

- 1) the establishment of a "stable" multi-party political system;
- 2) the holding of periodic "free and fair" elections under terms of an acceptable constitution; and
- 3) the establishment of an unrestricted free market economic system.

Some lists may include a few additional items such as greater recognition of the role of "civil society" and guaranteed freedom of speech, including a free press.

But special and increasing emphasis is being placed on the holding of "free and fair" elections which, properly administered, and with results certified by

international monitors, have become a sine qua non for international acknowledgement of a government's "legitimacy."

There is indeed a voracious appetite in Africa for democracy. So when people are invited to participate, they do, and often with great fervour. People who have never experienced an open election have made extreme sacrifices to be able to cast a ballot in recent national elections in Kenya, Angola, Congo, Togo, Burundi, Nigeria and elsewhere.

Regrettably, the results thus far have seldom matched peoples' expectations.

At a WCC consultation with church leaders from East and Southern Africa on "Peace, Democracy and Violence: The Church's Mission in Africa Today" held late last year in Windhoek, Namibia, one participant said that the notion that the elections alone constitute democracy is a form of modern-day political "witchcraft". People, tired of misery and especially of violence, have time and again been led to believe that depositing ballots papers in a "magic box" will end killing, bring peace, and, with luck, perhaps even a bit of prosperity. In practice, the holding of elections has achieved little for the poor. The resulting deception, this church leader suggested, could do more to impede than to foster true participatory democracy in Africa.

For democracy to be real in Africa, it must be Africanised, and African economies must be democratised.

The "Africanisation" of Democracy

It is not the idea of democracy but the form of democracy being imposed from outside which is doubted by thinking Africans today. It is not the universality of the human rights in which true democracy is rooted which is questioned, but the restricted and selective application of these rights which emphasises the civil and political (individual) rights and plays down the social, economic and cultural (collective) rights and thus impedes democracy in Africa.

To "Africanise" democracy, according to the Windhoek Consultation, is to emphasise the holistic character of life in African society. It is to respect the value of "family" in the extended African sense; the acceptance by the whole of responsibility for each individual member. It is to respect authority, but to hold all authorities accountable to God and the extended family – past, present and future. It is to respect the land and to establish a just relationship with it in community. It is to respect the rights and dignity of individuals and of peoples in and beyond one's own "family", and at the same time to hold each accountable to the others in renewed dedication to the goal of African Unity.

Nearly two decades ago, the respected Africa scholar Basil Davidson put the provocative question, "Can Africa Survive?" By now the answer must certainly

be clear: it can if it is allowed to do so on its own terms, with a fair deal in an interdependent world, and if Africans are supported in their determination to rebuild just, sustainable, democratic, African societies.

The Democratisation of the Economy

If, as John Philpot Curran, the Irish barrister, put it in his 1790 speech on "The Right of Election," the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, then equally it can be said that a precondition for lasting democracy is a minimum of social and economic justice for every citizen. The formal "democratisation" of the political life of a nation is insufficient either to obtain or to sustain democracy.

External pressures and "conditionalities" have led some autocratic regimes to don the cloak of Western-style democracy, but the results have seldom been more than cosmetic. True participatory democracy – government of, by and for the people, as the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America puts it – requires fundamental institutional change, authentic respect for individual and collective rights and freedoms, including economic rights.

The insistence that African nations adopt unrestricted free market policies as part of democratisation serves the interests of power to have free access to African markets and resources, but it does little to guarantee African countries equal participation in the global economy, or their citizens fair distribution of the meagre wealth they themselves produce.

As the Windhoek consultation made clear, there is an imperative need to democratise both the international and national economies within Africa. Political and economic participation must go hand in hand.

The Challenge to Pursue a new Pan-African Vision

During the brief, bright, confident period leading up to and following the first wave of independence in Africa, a generation of "scholar-statesmen" dominated the scene (names like Nyerere, Kaunda, Senghor, Touré, Cabral, Lumumba, Mondlane, come immediately to mind), offering a vision of a new Pan-African or at least a united African future.

Those hopes and aspirations have faded into dim memory for many Africans, constantly besieged by the powerful interests which regarded this vision as a threat to their privileged position in Africa, and disillusioned by the badly tarnished records of many of these same visionary patriots after they came into power.

Basil Davidson, in Africa in History, describes contradictions inherent even in that ebullient time, some of which foreshadowed later problems:

The period after 1960 was...one of puzzled dispute about the future, of setback and disillusionment, of search for new types of society which could offer genuine economic and social development as well as political freedom. In more than a few of these new states there were dominant groups who appeared content to relapse into positions of personal privilege and to repress, by convenient arrogation of all power to themselves, every effective criticism or popular movement aimed at regeneration. But even in these countries, abused though they were by political frivolity or personal corruption, the hopes and pressures of liberation continued to exercise an influence towards expansive change. They raised a ferment of new ideas, programmes, doctrines and ideological debate; and all this, however immediately fruitless it might seem, could only promise well for a continent of peoples long deprived of contact with the problems and solutions of the rest of the world, or of any democratic methods of discussing these.

African leaders and others who benefited from the unjust system must accept blame for many of its own present-day ills. It has been unable to forge bonds of solidarity within the continent strong enough to govern African affairs in a fair and disinterested way and to defend the common interests of Africa on the world scene. African leaders have more often continued to exploit the divisions among tribes and ethnic groups promoted by colonial rulers than to unite them in pursuit of a shared vision. African governments have been easy prey for the forces of corruption. A growing number of countries have become virtually ungovernable as a result.

Africa, as are other continents, is home to traditions both of war and of non-violent forms of reparation and conciliation. But Africans in positions of power have tended to rely much more on the former than on the latter aspect of African culture. The image of the warrior by far overshadows that of the conciliator.

Many Africans offer a similar self-critique. But it will take a massive effort of self-discipline; the regeneration of a vision of African unity, perhaps even the birth of a more realistic form of pan-Africanism with its eyes open to contemporary regional and global realities combined with a new acceptance by the world community of Africans' right and duty to manage their own affairs with justice for Africa to survive and its peoples prosper.

The Economic Liberation of Africa

African leaders of the 1960s were unanimous in their conviction that Africans must become masters of their own economies if the aspirations of independent Africa were to be met.

The reverse has occurred. African nations have steadily lost ground relative to the global economy over the past three decades. There are many reasons for

this. One, arguably, has been African governments' mismanagement of national economies and top-level corruption which has filled the pockets of corrupt leaders while the people were driven ever deeper into misery.

But the behaviour of such leaders was overlooked, condoned, even encouraged by external powers who were happy to have compromised men in positions of power ready to do their bidding.

Thirty years ago, African leaders conceived of a steady transition from economies reliant upon the extraction and export of raw materials or agricultural commodities to ones capable of self-sustenance with a modest and growing technological and industrial infrastructure.

This was not to be. Africa was locked out of commodity markets, saw the prices of its exports driven below the level of minimal profitability, and had its access to appropriate technology effectively blocked. At the same time, it was forced to open its markets to all comers, often destroying incipient entrepreneurial efforts at home. Aid for "development" was more and more tied to "security" considerations. Larger and larger portions of GNPs went to pay the industrialised nations for unnecessary military equipment and to maintain ever more greedy domestic military establishments with ties to the former metropole or new ideological "allies".

Africa went on the dole, and deeply into debt. During the 1980s, which some have called the "Decade of Greed" in North America and Europe, Africa's external debt increased 250% to \$290 billion (US) in 1992. African countries paid \$26 billion in service on that debt in 1991, about four times what they spent on health care for the region's 600 million people.

In 1991, Third World debt totalled some \$1.37 trillion (US), about half their collective GNPs. Africa carried about one-fifth of this total debt. But its burden was far greater, equal to approximately 90% of the continent's combined GNP.

There is an imperative need for significant unconditional debt relief for this poorest of the continents, which, through interest payments on this debt, subsidises the industrialised world's economies. The injustice is blatant.

The world's answer to Africa's cry for help has been the imposition through the International Monetary Fund of draconian "structural adjustment programmes". Africa has been kept hostage to its debt, and obliged to accept further diminished control over their own markets, to drop all subsidies for national producers, to "deregulate", and to cut back on social investments.

In return, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank promised significant new foreign investment, increased credits and new trade opportunities.

This promise has not been fulfilled. In terms of new investment, the most recent World Bank "World Debt Tables" speak of record levels of new capital flow to "developing world" economies, up 13 % in 1993. One-third of this increase went to East Asia, 23 % to Latin America, and 19 % to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Investment in sub-Saharan Africa remained stagnant at extremely low levels.

The picture regarding trade is similar. A recent Christian Aid report on the impact of the "success" of the GATT Uruguay Round on developing countries, entitled "Winners and Losers," points out that the world's poorest countries will effectively "bear the cost of a trade deal from which it seems every other country will benefit." Since the poorest are mostly in Africa, this continent stands to lose most, an estimated \$3 billion per year within a decade. By 2002, this report estimates, prices of coffee will be down another 6.1 % and cocoa 4 %, to speak of only two of the commodities on which poor African countries rely most heavily.

Some see in this combination of factors a new rape of Africa.

It is imperative that the "structural adjustment" policies now being imposed on Africa give way to ones which will benefit the people, not the wealthy debt-holders. And it is imperative that Europe, North America and Japan open their markets as well. One estimate holds that a 50 % reduction in the trade barriers of these countries would increase developing countries' exports by \$50 billion per year, just short of the \$54 billion they now receive in aid.

This form of "structural adjustment" could benefit Africa, too. But even for this to happen, African nations must reassert themselves. African unity once constituted a major force in debates on international trade and development policy. Now the African voice is so muted as to be virtually inaudible in the global centres of power. At a time when new regional trade pacts are being shaped which strengthen partners' capacities to compete in the global market place, African nations continue to place major barriers in the way of travel and economic intercourse with their own neighbours in the continent. These impediments must be removed. Africa needs not only political but also economic unity and solidarity to survive and defend its interests in the global economic forums.

The Changing Face of Religion in Africa

Africa has for millennia been a continent of great religious diversity. It remains so today, but in some new complexities. Some observers see in the emerging new configuration of religion in Africa a source of destruction of the social fabric of communities, of tension, dissension, and even war. Others see possibilities of new forms of cooperation, new and more dynamic relationships which could highlight African values and give signs to the world of how, for example, Christians and Muslims might live in harmony within society.

The new religious reality of Africa includes a rapid growth of some streams of Islam. The fact that some of this growth is promoted by a narrow, militant form of Islamic thinking is troubling, even threatening to many Christian communities. But some new forms of Christian-Muslim dialogue and cooperation are emerging which could open new doors of relationships.

New popular religious movements have emerged in several parts of the continent. Close to some aspects of traditional religion many take away the garb of the Christian church. Distinct from African "independent" churches, several of whom are close to or a part of the ecumenical fellowship, these new popular religious movements are likely to be a lasting feature of the African religious landscape for some time to come.

The new "invasion" by fundamentalist, often marginal Christian sects, many of them originating in the U.S.A., continues to exercise a divisive influence in the region. These must be studied and understood.

Looking to South Africa

Dreamers and scientific planners of all political stripes have long been projecting alternative futures for an Africa which includes South Africa. Few dared to think that, in such a short span of time, a post-apartheid South Africa might be reading itself to rejoin Africa.

The foregoing analysis of trends in Africa provides a necessary backdrop for the Central Committee's consideration of ecumenical policy on the new South Africa. Whether South Africa chooses to pursue a relatively isolationist path, or opens itself more broadly to its neighbours and the continent as a whole, it is bound to have a massive impact.

South Africa's new prospects have been made possible to a considerable degree by the contributions of peoples, churches and governments in Southern Africa. Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Angola offered safe haven to exiles and helped sustain the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

South Africa's economy, its well-developed system of communication, its high levels of technological development, its economic and political dynamism, its intellectual strength, are all unparalleled on the continent, making it a force to be reckoned with.

South Africa must deal as a matter of priority with a multitude of internal economic and social problems. Its present level of economic development resulted from decades of exploitation, oppression and marginalisation of the majority and draining the resources of neighbouring countries. It must now redress these injustices for its own people and its neighbours. It must refrain

from luring away intellectuals and foreign investors hard-won by much weaker economies like those of vulnerable states like Swaziland and Lesotho.

If it decides to join Africa, it could be a powerful motor driving the Southern African economy, and providing a fulcrum for regional development and economic cooperation schemes. This it owes its neighbours, after years of pillaging their economies, destabilising their governments, and fomenting, then fuelling, wars which have cost hundreds of thousands of lives in places like Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The churches of Africa, especially those of South Africa, can, if they are well-prepared, influence and help sustain a positive outcome. All will need the solidarity, prayers and help of churches throughout the *oikoumene*.

Challenges to the Churches

The role of the churches in Africa, of the WCC and its member churches in facing the challenges inherent in the situation described in this paper will be discussed in plenaries and Unit Committees throughout this meeting of the Central Committee, and it is not necessary to spell them out in detail here.

The churches of Africa have a key role to play in the transformation in Africa. People rely on them for leadership, training, mobilisation, representation, and both spiritual and material resources. Many are standing up to the challenge, and have suffered martyrs to the cause of justice and democracy. But others seem to have lost vision and the strength to carry on. One aim of the ecumenical movement is to accompany, give solace to and encourage all these churches in their attempts to remain faithful and relevant.

This paper has spoken a great deal about "external" and "internal" powers as it has discussed some of the characteristics of Africa today, trusting that readers from the churches would find there some shoes which fit them, too. It should go without saying that churches from the North have as often been a part of the colonial and neo-colonial system of thinking and acting as a counter-weight to it. Attitudes and actions ascribed to "external powers" describe well some of the ways in which churches from the North have related to Africa. On the other hand the transformation of African societies must involve confession, repentance and conversion on the part of many African Christians, church leaders and church institutions as well. The avarice, appetite for power, susceptibility to corruption, and autocratic attitudes ascribed to some political leaders on the continent, can be found among the churches as well. Christians' and churches' ability to see specks of dust in the eyes of government authorities or of outside powers – be they secular or ecclesiastical – would be greatly enhanced by the removal of the logs in their own!

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

CONSTITUTION, RULES, REGULATIONS AND BY-LAWS

Note: This document is set out as a draft for the revision of the booklet "Rules, By-laws, Mandates and Programmes" (compiled by Ans J. van der Bent, and published in 1987) to take into account the restructuring of the Council approved by the Central Committee in 1991 and the changes made in consequence.

I. CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
(available separately)

II. RULES OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
(available separately)

III. WORKING GUIDE TO THE RULES OF DEBATE IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

It is suggested that these be incorporated here, subject to any amendments approved by the Central Committee.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, BOARDS, WORKING GROUPS AND ADVISORY GROUPS

Within the overall framework laid down in the Constitution and Rules, the responsibilities are as follows:

1. **CENTRAL COMMITTEE**, which is elected by the Assembly, is the governing authority of the WCC between Assemblies, and its responsibilities are set out in the Constitution (V.2) and the Rules (V.5).
2. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** is elected by the Central Committee and its responsibilities are set out in the Rules (VI.2)
3. **A UNIT** (referred to hitherto as a "Programme Unit") is an administrative instrument set up by the Central Committee to create, oversee and implement programmatic activities and specific projects, which will further the purposes of the Council.
4. **UNIT COMMITTEES** are appointed by the Central Committee (Rules V 5(d) and VII 2) and are composed of approximately one-fifth of the members of Central Committee and three representatives of the Unit Commission, (normally including the Co-Moderators), who are full voting members of the Unit Committee. Delegated observers, delegated representatives and advisers invited to Central Committee meetings may participate as non-voting members. These non-voting members should not exceed one third of the participants, except by vote of the Unit Committee.

The Unit Committees

- a) review and recommend policy directions (including those relating to finance and Staffing) for the unit in accordance with the general policies determined by Central Committee and in the light of the work of commissions of the programme units and the coordinating task of Central Committee;
- b) shall receive a report of the unit commission and make appropriate recommendations to the Central Committee;
- c) recommend to Central Committee proposals for active programme directions and emerging concerns for Central Committee consideration and action;
- d) make recommendations to Central Committee on matters arising from the General Secretary's and the Moderator's reports.
- e) make recommendations to Central Committee on other matters referred to them.

5. COMMITTEE ON THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT is a reference committee whose membership is established in the same way as the unit committees (Rules VII 2). It considers those matters of general concern referred to it by the Central Committee, including the reports of the programmes and services directly related to the General Secretariat (except for finance matters which are dealt with by the Finance Committee). In this capacity it:

- a) reviews and evaluates the work of the General Secretariat in its concern for the wholeness and oneness of the Council;
- b) reviews and evaluates the work of the areas of relationships and communication, including the work of the Joint Working Group;
- c) reviews matters arising from the reports of the Moderator and General Secretary;

6. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE is elected by the Central Committee from among its membership and its responsibilities are set out in Rules VIII.

7. UNIT COMMISSIONS are appointed by Central Committee (Rules V 5 (d) and VII 3). Their task is to carry forward the purposes of the Unit in the work of the WCC and the life of the member churches. The Programme Unit Commission will undertake a careful consideration of the priorities established by the Unit Committee and will translate these priorities into effective programmes. The Programme Unit Commission will appoint Working Groups as necessary and as feasible within budgetary constraints and accompany staff on the implementation of the programmatic work. The Commission will meet approximately every 18 months and should meet on a schedule timed to enable reporting to the Central Committee.

7.1 Functions

- a) Commissions are accountable to Central Committee, and report to Central Committee through the respective unit committee of Central Committee.
- b) The Central Committee delegates to the commissions the work of translating priorities established by Central Committee into effective programmes in accordance with Central Committee policy, and that of reviewing and evaluating the programmes of the units.

- c) Commissions assist the programme work of the WCC by their reflection and analysis of the world situation in the light of the concerns of member churches.
- d) Commissions appoint mandatory working groups when requested by Central Committee. The home unit of these working groups shall report to the Central Committee through the unit committee.
- e) Commissions appoint ad hoc working groups as necessary and as feasible within budgetary constraints.
- f) Commissions receive reports from and monitor the work of the Boards appointed by the Central Committee for specialised activities and reports with recommendations to the Central Committee through the unit committee.)
- g) Commissions act as advocates and interpreters of the WCC, its policies and programmes.
- h) Commissions should assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of the WCC.
- i) Commissions provide oversight of the detailed planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic activities and projects within the overall policies and budget approved by Central Committee.

7.2 Membership

- a) The four Unit Commissions are composed normally of 25-40 persons, including not less than five members of Central Committee.
- b) Members shall be selected, in consultation with churches, on the basis of council-wide criteria for representation and on the basis of their qualifications for active and effective service on the Unit Commission.
- c) Members serve until the next Assembly.
- d) Members have a responsibility to develop clear lines of communication with their respective churches and other constituencies to ensure a two-way sharing of information: sharing their church's concerns with the commission and keeping their church and region informed of the programmatic work of the unit.
- e) WCC staff participate in commission deliberations at the invitation of the moderator and the executive director who should ensure that the commission benefits from their experience and expertise.

8. **BOARDS** The Central Committee may mandate and appoint Boards for specialised activities, which shall function as permanent or standing Working Groups, reporting through a Unit Commission. Boards are expert groups set up by the Central Committee on the recommendation of a Unit Committee to have responsibility for certain specific programmes as set out in the Unit regulations and by-laws.(See V.5.d)

9. **MANDATED WORKING GROUPS:** Central Committee may mandate the appointment of working groups composed of 5 - 15 persons to ensure the development and coordination of council-wide programmatic work. In September 1991, Central Committee mandated working groups on education, women and youth. Composed of up to 15 persons with relevant expertise and representing all programme units and relationships, the working groups on education, women and youth are appointed and

based within a programme unit commission; they are advisory to and report to all commissions through their membership on matters related to education, women and youth.

10. **WORKING GROUPS** are expert groups composed of 5 - 15 persons appointed by a programme unit commission for specific periods of time to assist in the development of a particular programmatic thrust. They report to the programme unit commission which appointed them.

11. **ADVISORY GROUPS** are appointed by and report to the General Secretary. They are:

- a) to provide guidance for the work of the Offices of Inter-Religions Relations, Church and ecumenical Relations and Communications;
- b) to advise the General Secretary on inter-unit cooperation and communication within the Council;
- c) to advise on and share in the task of interpreting the life and work of the Council to the Churches and other partners in the ecumenical movement.

* * *

V. REGULATIONS FOR THE WORK OF THE PROGRAMME UNITS

1. **THE TITLES** of the programme units shall be:

Unit I	Unity and Renewal
Unit II	Churches in Mission: Health, Education, Witness
Unit III	Justice, Peace and Creation
Unit IV	Sharing and Service

2. **MEANINGS** in these regulations:

2.1 *The Unit Committee* is the Committee appointed by and from the Central Committee (see IV.4 above).

2.2 *The Unit Commission* is the Commission appointed by the Central Committee (see IV.7 above).

2.3 *The Officers of the Unit* shall be the Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the Unit Committee and the Co-Moderators of the Unit Commission. The Executive Director of the Unit shall be, *ex officio*, secretary of the Unit Committee and Commission.

2.4 *The Staff* (see 7 below) comprises all staff employed by the WCC to work in the Unit.

3. **AIM AND MANDATE** of the Units:

The Central Committee shall determine the aim and mandate of each Unit and any amendment shall be approved by the Central Committee.

4. THE UNIT COMMITTEE:

The composition and functions of the Unit Committee are as set out in IV.4 above.

5. THE UNIT COMMISSION:

The composition and functions of the Unit Commission are as set out in IV.7 above.

6. THE OFFICERS OF THE UNIT

The Officers of the Unit shall be responsible for advising the Executive Director between meetings of the Committee and of the Commission. They shall be consulted by the Executive Director on staffing matters (as provided for in paragraph 7 below), financial and budget priorities and preparations and agendas for meetings of the Committee and the Commission. The Officers will ensure appropriate accountability between the Unit Commission and the Unit Committee and provide the necessary inputs for the Unit Committee. The Co-Moderators of the Unit Commission report to the Moderator of the Unit Committee for such responsibilities as are delegated to them between the meetings of the Central Committee. The Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the Unit Committee will be consulted on policy matters, whereas the Co-Moderators of the Unit Commission will advise on programmatic and other matters within their delegated responsibilities. If necessary the Unit Officers may make decisions on urgent matters between the meetings of the Committee and Commission, so long as these are consistent with the policy of the Unit and are reported to the Committee or the Commission as appropriate at its next meeting.

7. THE UNIT STAFF

The staff of the Unit shall be appointed in accordance with the Rules (IX) and the procedures for the appointment of staff as agreed from time to time by the Central and Executive Committees. The Executive Director will consult with the other Officers of the Unit on staffing matters.

8. THE UNIT FINANCES

The Central Committee (through its Finance and Unit Committees) has overall responsibility for the finances and budgets of the Units, which are prepared and submitted by the Executive Directors. Commissions provide guidance on planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic activities and specific projects within the overall policies and budgets approved by the Central Committee. There shall be a Unit Finance Officer, responsible for advising the Executive Director, liaising with the Office of Management and Finance and co-ordinating the financial operations of the Unit.

9. MANDATED AND AD HOC WORKING GROUPS

Working Groups are set up as indicated in paras IV.9 and 10 above and will report through the Unit Commissions.

10. BOARDS

Boards are set up as indicated in Rule (V.5.d) and para IV.8 above. Their work is regulated in accordance with the by-laws for specialised activities set out in section VI below:

- A. Faith and Order (Unit I)
- B. The Ecumenical Institute, Bossey (Unit I)
- C. The Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (Unit II)
- D. International Affairs (CCIA) (Unit III)
- F. The Ecumenical Churches' Loan Fund (Unit IV)

11. ORGANISATION AND METHODS OF WORKING

The Unit shall be free to adopt such working guidelines as it considers necessary to regulate the affairs of the Unit and its Commission, Working Groups and Boards, so long as these are consistent with the policies, rules, regulations and by-laws of the Council and are approved by the Unit Committee. The Unit guidelines may make provision for an Executive Committee.

12. PROGRAMME COORDINATION

The General Secretary shall provide for the coordination of programmes with the aim of making connections between the Units and their programmes, to minimise overlapping, encourage inter-Unit cooperation and to foster joint ventures between the Units.

13. AMENDMENT OF THE REGULATIONS

The regulations of the Unit may be amended by the Central Committee at any time on the recommendation of, or after consultation with the Unit Committee.

VI. BY-LAWS FOR THE WORK OF SPECIALISED ACTIVITIES

DEFINITIONS in all the following by-laws:

- 1 The Council means the World Council of Churches.
- 2 The Assembly means the Assembly of the World Council of Churches.
- 3 The Central Committee means the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

4. **The Unit** means an administrative instrument set up by the Central Committee to create, oversee and implement programmatic activities and specific projects, which will further the purposes of the Council.
5. **The Finance Committee** means the Finance Committee of the Council appointed by the Central Committee.

A. FAITH AND ORDER (Unit I)

1. MEANINGS in these by-laws:

- 1.1 **Faith and Order** means the Plenary Commission and the Board hereinafter defined.
- 1.2 **The Plenary Commission** means the Plenary Commission on Faith and Order of the Council.
- 1.3 **The Board** means the Board of Faith and Order of the Council.
- 1.4 **The Officers** means the Moderator and Vice-Moderators of the Plenary Commission and the Board, the Executive Director of Unit I and the Director of the Faith and Order Secretariat.
- 1.5 **The Secretariat** means the Secretariat of Faith and Order.

2. INTRODUCTION

Faith and Order represents an historic, founding movement of the Council. There is a need for it to have a continuing, identifiable visibility and structure in order to maintain its ability to incorporate the participation of the Roman Catholic Church and other non-member churches of the Council in the organising and staffing of its activities within the overall framework of the Council and in particular of Unit I.

3. AIM AND FUNCTIONS

3.1 **The Aim** of Faith and Order is to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe.

3.2 **The Functions** of the Plenary Commission and the Board are:

- a) to study such questions of faith, order and worship as bear on this aim and to examine such social, cultural, political, racial and other factors as affect the unity of the Church;
- b) to study the theological implications of the existence and development of the ecumenical movement and to keep prominently before the Council the obligation to work towards unity;

- c) to promote prayer for unity;
- d) to study matters in the present relationship of the churches to one another which cause difficulties or which particularly require theological clarification;
- e) to study the steps being taken by the churches towards closer unity with one another and to provide information concerning such steps;
- f) to bring to the attention of the churches, by the best means available, reports of Faith and Order meetings and studies;
- g) to provide opportunities for consultation among those whose churches are engaged in union negotiations or other specific efforts towards unity.

In pursuing these functions the following principles shall be observed:

- i. Faith and Order in seeking to draw the churches into conversation and study, shall recognise that only the churches themselves are competent to initiate steps towards union by entering into negotiations with one another. The work of Faith and Order is to act, on their invitation, as helper and adviser.
- ii. It shall conduct its work in such a way that all are invited to share reciprocally in giving and receiving and no one shall be asked to be disloyal to his or her convictions nor to compromise them. Differences are to be clarified and recorded as honestly as agreements.

4. ORGANISATION

4.1 The Faith and Order Plenary Commission and Board are constitutionally responsible to the Central Committee through the Commission of Unit I.

4.2 The Plenary Commission shall have as its primary task theological study, debate and appraisal. It will initiate the programme on Faith and Order, lay down general guidelines for it and share in its communication to the churches.

4.3 The Board will be responsible for implementing the programme, guiding the staff in the development of Faith and Order work and making administrative decisions on behalf of Faith and Order, supervising the ongoing work and acting on behalf of Faith and Order between meetings of the Plenary Commission. It shall represent the work of Faith and Order in relation to the Commission of Unit I and, through it, to the Council generally.

4.4 The Plenary Commission shall consist of not more than 120 members (including the Officers and other members of the Board).

4.5 The Board shall consist of not more than 30 members (including the Officers).

4.6 The Plenary Commission, before each Assembly, shall appoint a Nominations Committee to prepare a list of names for the election of the new Board by the Central Committee at its first meeting after the Assembly. The members will hold office until the next Assembly.

4.7 The Board, at its last meeting before each Assembly, shall propose a

person as Moderator of Faith and Order for election by the Central Committee at its first meeting after the Assembly. The Moderator will hold office until the next Assembly.

4.8 At its first meeting after the Assembly, the Board shall elect not more than four Vice-Moderators from among its members. The Vice-Moderators will hold office until the next Assembly.

4.9 At its first meeting after the Assembly the Board shall prepare a list of names additional to the Moderator and members of the Board, for the election of the new Plenary Commission by the Central Committee at its next meeting. The Commissioners will hold office until the next Assembly.

4.10 Vacancies on the Plenary Commission and the Board shall be filled by the Central Committee on the nomination of the Board.

4.11 Since the size of the Plenary Commission and the Board and the provisions of by-law 4.12 preclude full representation of all member churches of the Council, appointment shall be made on the basis of personal capacity to serve the purposes of Faith and Order. At the same time, care shall be taken to secure a reasonable geographical and confessional representation of churches on the Plenary Commission, Board and among the Officers and Secretariat. The membership of the Plenary Commission shall include a sufficient number of women, young and lay persons.

4.12 Persons who are members of churches which do not belong to the Council, but which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour are eligible for membership of the Plenary Commission and the Board.

4.13 Before any candidate is nominated for appointment by the Central Committee, steps shall be taken to ensure that his or her name is acceptable to the church to which he or she belongs. A member should be willing to accept some responsibility for communication between Faith and Order and his or her church and ecumenical bodies in his or her country.

5. THE SECRETARIAT

5.1 The Faith and Order Secretariat shall be the members of the staff of Unit I who are assigned to the work of Faith and Order.

5.2 The staff will be appointed in accordance with the normal procedure for the appointment of Council staff. The General Secretary shall, after due consultation with the Officers of Faith and Order and of Unit I, nominate for appointment or reappointment members of the executive staff of the Secretariat by the Central Committee or the Executive Committee of the Council. Prior to the submission of names to the Central Committee or the Executive Committee the Board will make its views known on the nominations to the appointing body.

5.3 The Secretariat shall be responsible for ensuring the continuation of the work of Faith and Order in accordance with the policy agreed at meetings of the Plenary Commission and the Board and approved by the Central Committee. The Secretariat will keep in regular contact with the Officers and members of Faith and Order.

6. WORLD CONFERENCES

6.1 World Conferences on Faith and Order may be held when, on the recommendation of the Board, the Central Committee so decides.

6.2 The invitation to take part in such Conferences shall be addressed to the churches throughout the world which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.

6.3 Such Conferences shall consist primarily of delegates appointed by the churches to represent them. Youth delegates, special advisers and observers may also be invited.

6.4 Careful attention shall be given to the communication of the reports and recommendations of the World Conferences to the Churches.

7. FAITH AND ORDER MEETINGS

7.1 The Plenary Commission shall normally meet once between Assemblies, but may be convened at any time by the Board with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Council.

7.2 The Board shall normally meet every year, but may be convened at any time by the Moderator in consultation with the other Officers of Faith and Order or at the request of not less than one third of the members of the Board.

7.3 The Secretariat shall be responsible for giving due notice of meetings of both the Plenary Commission and of the Board, for keeping its minutes and other records and, in consultation with the Moderator, for preparing its agenda.

7.4 A member of the Plenary Commission, by advance notice in writing, signed by both the Commission member and the appropriate representative of the member's church, to the Secretariat may name a proxy to represent the member at any meeting at which the member is unable to be present.

7.5 A member of the Board may name a person to represent him or her at any meeting at which the member is unable to be present, but such a person may not vote.

7.6 Other persons may be invited to be present and to speak, if the Moderator so rules, but not to vote. In particular, in order to secure representation of its study groups, members of these may be invited to attend either body as consultants.

7.7 In the absence of the Moderator, one of the Vice-Moderators shall preside at such meetings. In the absence of any of these Officers, the meeting shall elect one of its members to take the chair. One third of the total membership (including proxies) shall constitute a quorum.

7.8 Faith and Order shall normally conduct its business according to the rule of procedure of the Central Committee. Questions arising about procedure shall be decided by a majority vote of those present and voting.

7.9 If, at any time when it is inconvenient to hold a meeting of the Board, the Moderator and Secretariat shall decide that there is business requiring immediate action by the Board, it shall be permissible for them to obtain by post or fax the opinions of its members and the majority opinion thus ascertained shall be treated as equivalent to the decision of a duly convened meeting.

8. FAITH AND ORDER STUDIES

8.1 The Board, giving due attention to the general guidelines laid down by the Plenary Commission (see 4.2), shall formulate and carry through the study programme.

8.2 The Secretariat, as authorised by the Board, shall invite persons to serve on the study groups and consultations. They shall pay particular regard to the need to involve members of both the Plenary Commission and the Board in the study programme, whether by membership of a study group, consultations or by written consultation. Due regard shall be paid to special competence in the fields of study concerned and to the need for the representation of a variety of ecclesiastical traditions and theological viewpoints.

8.3 Study groups shall normally include both those who are and those who are not members of the Plenary Commission or the Board. They may also include persons who do not belong to members churches of the Council.

8.4 In planning such studies all possible contacts shall be sought or maintained with allied work already in progress under such auspices as those of regional or national councils or of individual churches or of ecumenical institutes and theological faculties or departments.

8.5 Study groups shall prepare reports, as requested, for discussion in the Plenary Commission and the Board, at World Conferences on Faith and Order or at Assemblies. Any such reports should bear a clear indication of its status.

8.6 The publication of such reports and of other Faith and Order papers shall be the responsibility of the Secretariat, provided that adequate financial resources are available.

9. FINANCE

9.1 The financing of the work of Faith and Order will be undertaken in the normal way as part of the work of Unit I. The Secretariat, in close consultation with the Board, shall be responsible for working with the Executive Director and Finance Officer of the Unit in preparing a budget for the activities of Faith and Order.

9.2 The Board will receive reports on the budget and funding of the work of Faith and Order and will provide oversight of the detailed planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic activities (e.g. studies) and projects of Faith and Order within the overall policies and budget of the Unit approved by the Central Committee.

9.3 The Board will assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of Faith and Order.

10. COMMUNICATION WITH THE CHURCHES

The Plenary Commission and the Board shall be concerned to facilitate communication with the churches. They shall make generally available results of studies where such studies are formally communicated to the churches

through the Central Committee. In certain studies the churches may be invited to make a formal response.

11. REVISION OF THE BY-LAWS

Proposals for the amendment of these by-laws may be made by the Board or by the Central Committee in consultation with the Board and the Unit Commission. Any proposed amendment must be circulated in writing to the members of the Plenary Commission not less than three months before the meeting of the Board at which it is to be considered for adoption. A proposed amendment requires the approval of two-thirds of the members of the Board present and voting, before final approval by the Central Committee.

B. THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE, BOSSEY (Unit I)

1. STATUS

The Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, located at the Château de Bossey, Céligny, Switzerland, (hereafter called "the Institute") is a specialised activity of the Council located in Unit I.

2. AIM

It shall be the aim of the Institute to contribute to the formation of future generations of ecumenical leadership among both clergy and laity; to provide for ecumenical theological encounter in an inter-cultural and inter-confessional setting and to build a community in which ecumenical experience and different kinds of spirituality are being shared and ecumenical understanding nurtured.

3. FUNCTIONS

In pursuing its aim the Institute shall:

- 3.1 Conduct a Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies as a period of graduate academic studies, worship, community life and work for students from various countries and churches;
- 3.2 Organise courses and consultations;
- 3.3 Cooperate with ecumenical partner institutions and centres in activities of ecumenical education and research;
- 3.4 Engage in extension work;
- 3.5 Sponsor an ecumenical venue and facilities for meetings and conferences.

4. ORGANISATION

4.1 The Institute shall have a programme section and a guest house section, both serving the basic aim as stated in paragraph 2 above.

4.2 The programme section comprises all programme activities which are sponsored or co-sponsored by the Institute, including in particular the annual

Graduate School and the various courses and consultations.

4.3 The guest house section comprises all activities related to the management of the Institute as a meeting centre and guest house.

5. BOARD

5.1 The activities of the Institute shall be governed by a Board, which shall be responsible to the Central Committee through the Commission of Unit I.

5.2 The Board shall comprise not more than 15 members, including the Moderator. The Moderator and members of the Board shall be appointed by the Central Committee and shall serve until the next Assembly. The membership shall include one person nominated by the University of Geneva (see 7.2 below), the Executive Director of Unit I and others with experience in academic teaching, ecumenical education, lay training and institutional finance and administration.

5.3 The Board shall elect a Vice-Moderator from within its number.

5.4 The Board shall be responsible for the work of the Institute within the framework of the Constitution and Rules of the Council and the Regulations of Unit I. In particular it shall:

- a) determine the annual programme of the Institute, including the theme and structure of the Graduate School and subjects for its courses and consultations;
- b) advise the Director with regard to all aspects of the implementation of the aim and functions of the Institute;
- c) receive the annual report of the Director;
- d) to formulate the business policy for the management of the Institute as a meeting centre and guest house and to supervise its implementation;
- e) receive reports on the budget and funding of the Institute and provide oversight of the detailed planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic and guest house activities within the overall policies and budget of the Unit approved by the Central Committee;
- f) assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of the Institute.

5.5 The Board shall normally meet once a year. Meetings shall be called by the Moderator. A special meeting may be called if it is requested by at least six members or by the Executive Committee of the Council for specific reasons.

5.6 The Officers of the Board shall be the Moderator, Vice-Moderator and Executive Director of Unit I and they may act in consultation with the Director on behalf of the Board in respect of urgent or routine matters and business referred to them by the Board. They must report their actions to the next meeting of the Board for approval.

5.7 The Board may also from time to time appoint sub-committees for specifically stated purposes.

5.8 The Board shall report to each meeting of the Unit I Commission.

6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF

6.1 The staff of the Institute shall be the members of the staff of Unit I who are assigned to the work of the Institute.

6.2 The staff will be appointed in accordance with the normal procedure for the appointment of Council staff, but the General Secretary will consult with the Officers of the Institute regarding the appointment of the Director and executive members of the Institute staff by the Central Committee or the Executive Committee of the Council.

6.3 The Director shall have overall responsibility for the Institute. He is responsible to the Board and the Executive Director of Unit I.

6.4 An Administrator may be appointed, on the recommendation of the Board, who will have responsibility for the operation of the guest house.

7. PARTNERS

7.1 The Institute is related to the University of Geneva by a special agreement.

7.2 In pursuing its aims and functions the Institute may enter into agreements of partnership with academic institutions, ecumenical bodies and conference or educational centres. The Institute is represented in such agreements through the Board unless otherwise determined.

8. FINANCES

8.1 The financing of the work of Institute will be undertaken in the normal way as part of the work of Unit I. The Director will therefore be responsible for working with the Executive Director and Finance Officer of the Unit in preparing a budget for the activities of the Institute, which will then be submitted as part of the Unit budget to the Finance Committee and the Central Committee.

8.2 The Board will receive reports on the budget and funding of the work of the Institute and will provide oversight of the detailed planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic and guest house activities of the Institute within the overall policies and budget of the Unit approved by the Central Committee.

8.3 The Board should assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of the Institute.

9. AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended by Central Committee on the recommendation of, or in consultation with the Board and the Unit Commission. Any proposed amendment must be circulated in writing to the members of the Board not less than three calendar months before the meeting of the Board at which it is to be considered.

C. CONFERENCE ON WORLD MISSION AND EVANGELISM (Unit II)

1. INTRODUCTION

There shall be a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

2. MEANINGS in these by-laws:

2.1 The Conference means the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.

2.2 The Commission, advisory to the Unit Committee, means the Commission of Unit II - Churches in Mission: Health, Education, Witness.

2.3 The Officers shall be the Co-Moderators of the Commission and the Executive Director of the Unit.

2.4 The Staff means the staff of Unit II assigned to work on world mission and evangelism.

3. AIM

The aim of the Conference is to assist the Christian community in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved.

4. GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

4.1 The main task of the Conference is to provide opportunities for churches, mission agencies, groups and national and regional councils concerned with Christian mission to meet together for reflection and consultation leading to common witness.

4.2 The Conference shall normally meet once between Assemblies. It shall be convened by the Commission with the approval of the Central Committee.

4.3 The results of the Conference shall be communicated to its constituency by the Commission and shall also be reported to the Assembly and the Central Committee through the Commission.

4.4 Administrative and executive responsibilities of the Conference shall be carried out by the Commission and staff.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Subject to the approval of the Central Committee the Commission shall determine the size, membership and programme of the World Conference, with due attention to regional, confessional, sex and age diversity within the overall norms set by the WCC. Due care will be taken to provide for substantial representation of WCC member churches and CWME affiliated bodies from names submitted by them, along with a substantial number of persons involved daily at the frontiers of Christian mission.

5.2 The Commission shall take care to maintain an ongoing communication with member churches and members of the Conference following the Conference itself, in order that this body of people may assist in following-up Conference decisions and may serve as interpreters of developments related to Conference follow-up.

5.3 Members of the Conference shall seek to promote in their councils and churches the aims and findings of the Conference and the work of Unit II on world mission and evangelism. They shall draw to the attention of the Commission matters with which they feel it should be concerned. They shall seek to promote support, including financial support, for the work of the Unit.

5.4 Consultants and observers may be invited to meetings of the Conference by the Commission and Unit Committee. They shall have the right to speak, but not to vote.

6. AFFILIATION AND CONSULTATIVE RELATIONS

6.1 All Councils affiliated to the CWME under the previous Constitution shall be regarded as affiliated to the Conference under these by-laws, unless they notify to the contrary.

6.2 Other national councils or regional conferences which accept the aim of the Conference may become affiliated to the Conference. Churches in countries where there is no affiliated national council may apply for affiliation to the Conference. A group of churches organised for joint action for mission in a country where there is an affiliated national council or such an international or intercontinental group of churches, may also apply for affiliation. Applications for affiliation shall be considered by the Commission. If the application is supported by a two-thirds majority of the Commission present and voting, this action shall be communicated to the affiliated members of the Conference and, unless objection is received from more than one third of them within six months, the applicant shall be declared affiliated. There shall be consultation with the member churches of the WCC in the area concerned, except in the case of councils already in association with the WCC.

6.3 National and regional Christian councils which do not desire to become affiliated with the Conference and churches and other groupings may, if they accept the aims of the Conference, request a consultative relation with the Conference. Action on such requests shall be taken by the Commission. Councils and other groupings in consultative relation may send consultants to meetings of the Conference, who shall be entitled to speak but not to vote.

7. OFFICERS

7.1 The Co-Moderators of the Commission shall be the Co-Moderators of the Conference and, together with the Executive Director, shall act as the Officers of the Conference.

7.2 The Conference, at each meeting, may appoint from its membership a Steering Group to work with the Officers in facilitating the Conference.

8. QUORUM

One third of the members of the Conference shall constitute a quorum at any given session, provided that those present at the session come from at least three continents and represent at least one third of the Affiliated Councils.

9. AMENDMENT OF THE BY-LAWS

9.1 These by-laws may be amended by the Central Committee on the recommendation of, or in consultation with the Commission.

9.2 Amendments may be proposed by the Affiliated Councils, the Commission, the Conference or the Central Committee.

9.3 Notice of any proposed amendment must be sent to the Affiliated Councils and members of the Conference not less than three months prior to its consideration by the Commission or Conference.

9.4 The Commission may recommend a proposed amendment to the Central Committee unless one third of the Affiliated Councils have indicated in writing prior to the Commission meeting that they oppose the amendment.

D. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (CCIA) - (Unit III)

1. INTRODUCTION

The churches joined in the Council have had an historic interest in international affairs. They have been represented at the United Nations, its specialised agencies and in other intergovernmental organisations through the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), which was formed before the Council in 1946. To preserve these relationships the Board on International Affairs (CCIA), located in Unit III on Justice, Peace and Creation, will continue to be known as the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs for purposes of the external relationships of the Council.

2. MEANINGS within these by-laws:

2.1 **The Board** means the Board for International Affairs (CCIA).

2.2 **The Commission** means the Commission of Unit III - Justice, Peace and Creation.

2.3 **The Staff** means the staff of Unit III assigned to work on international affairs.

3. AIMS

3.1 It shall be the task of the Board to witness to the Lordship of Christ over human beings and history by serving people in the field of international relations and promoting reconciliation and oneness of human beings by creation; to God's

gracious and redemptive action in history; and to the assurance of the coming kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. This service is demanded by the continuing ministry of Christ in the world of priestly intercession, prophetic judgement, the arousing of hope and conscience and pastoral care. This task necessitates engagement in immediate and concrete issues as well as the formulation of general Christian aims and purposes.

3.2 In seeking to fulfil this task the Board shall serve the Council, its Units, the member churches, the national and regional ecumenical organisations and Christian world communions with which the Council is related and such other international Christian bodies as may be agreed by the Council (see 3.4 below), as a source of information and guidance in their approach to international problems, as a medium of counsel and action and as an organ in formulating the Christian mind on world issues and bringing that mind effectively to bear upon such issues.

3.3 The Board will call the attention of churches and councils to problems which are especially claimant upon the Christian conscience at any particular time and to suggest ways in which Christians may act effectively upon those problems in their respective countries and internationally and to respond to issues raised by churches and national and regional ecumenical organisations.

3.4 Special relations may be negotiated from time to time by the Council with the Christian World Communions, other international Christian bodies and with regional and national councils of churches and the Board shall assist them in their approach to international affairs and be assisted by them.

3.5 The Board shall encourage:

- a) the promotion of peace with justice and freedom;
- b) the development of international law and of effective international institutions;
- c) the respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, special attention being given to the problem of religious liberty;
- d) efforts for disarmament;
- e) the furtherance of economic and social justice;
- f) acceptance by all nations of the obligation to promote to the utmost the welfare of all peoples and the development of free political institutions;
- g) the promotion of the right of self-determination of peoples under alien or colonial domination;
- h) the international promotion of social, cultural, educational and humanitarian enterprises.

4. FUNCTIONS

4.1 To initiate and carry out appropriate actions for the furtherance of the aims.

4.2 To advise and assist in the formulation of the Council's policies on international affairs.

4.3 To assist churches and national and regional ecumenical organisations in the formulation of their policies on international affairs and to consult them.

- 4.4 To share with the churches information and analysis on critical political issues as part of the educational task.
- 4.5 To monitor national and international political developments and to analyse and interpret them, especially as they affect the life and witness of the churches.
- 4.6 To arrange for or promote research on selected problems of international justice, world order and peace and to utilise the results in the furtherance of the work of the Board.
- 4.7 To support the efforts of the churches and related groups in their activities in conformity with the aims listed in by-law 3 above.
- 4.8 To follow up and support at the international level initiatives taken by churches and ecumenical organisations in the areas of concern of the Board.
- 4.9 To be a forum for exchange of information and experience among churches and groups in international affairs, especially related to conflict resolution and the promotion of peace and human rights.
- 4.10 To make representations to governments in accordance with the policies of the Council in matters of concern to the Council or to any of its member churches.
- 4.11 To develop relationships in study and action with non-member churches and organisations including those of other faiths, sharing aims similar to those listed in by-law 3 above.
- 4.12 To maintain and provide for the maintenance of contacts with international bodies such as the United Nations and its agencies, including regional bodies, which will assist in the attainment of the aims described in by-law 3.5 above.
- 4.13 To represent the Council or to provide for its representation and the coordination thereof before these international bodies, as may be specifically arranged. The Board may also represent, facilitate and help coordinate the representation of member churches, related international Christian organisations and non-member churches before such international bodies.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD AND STAFF

- 5.1 The Board shall be composed of 15 members and, *ex officio*, the Executive Director of Unit III and the Coordinator of International Affairs (CCIA) staff of the Unit.
- 5.2 The Central Committee shall appoint the Moderator and members of the Board on the recommendation of the Commission and Unit Committee.
- 5.3 Christian knowledge and commitment and technical competence in international affairs and related subjects shall be the chief qualifications sought in all members. There will be an emphasis on laymen and lay women as members of the Board and a proper balance of the membership in respect of geography, age, race, culture and confession shall be sought.
- 5.4 The task of a Board member shall be:
 - a) to attend meetings of the Board and to participate in its work;
 - b) to correspond with the Officers, drawing their attention to matters which, in his or her view, should occupy their attention and advising them of the relevant data;

- c) to cooperate with recognised councils and church agencies and committees in educating public opinion.

5.5 There shall be a Coordinator of the Unit Staff assigned to the work of International Affairs (CCIA) who, for purposes of the external relations of the Council, shall be designated Executive Secretary of CCIA.

5.6 The Board shall elect a Vice-Moderator from its membership.

5.7 The staff assigned by the Unit to work on international affairs will be appointed and employed according to the normal procedures of the Council, though the Moderator and Vice-Moderator will be consulted regarding the appointment of executive staff.

5.8 The staff will be responsible to the Board and the Executive Director of the Unit for carrying out the work on international affairs.

6. PANELS OR ADVISORY GROUPS

The Board may appoint panels or advisory groups on particular aspects of its work in pursuance of its aims as stated in by-law 3 and the performance of its functions as stated in by-law 4 above.

7. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

7.1 The Board shall normally meet every eighteen months at a place and time determined by the Coordinator in consultation with the Moderator and the Executive Director of the Unit.

7.2 Any eight members of the Board or the General Secretary of the Council may require a meeting to be convened for any purpose within the aims of the Board and the Moderator shall forthwith convene a meeting giving due notice of its purpose.

7.3 In the case of members who give sufficient notice that they are unable to attend a meeting of the Board, the Moderator and Coordinator may invite a substitute, who shall have the right to speak and to vote.

7.4 Consultants may be invited by the Moderator and Coordinator to attend meetings of the Board based on their having special competence on major matters under consideration. They shall have the right to speak, but not to vote.

7.5 The quorum for meetings of the Board shall be one third of the members.

7.6 The Board shall determine the general policies to be followed by the Moderator, Vice-Moderator and staff in fulfilment of the aims of the Board. The Board may also approve statements proposed for general publication in the name of the Board, but in this case such statements are subject to the relevant rules of the Council.

8. FINANCE

8.1 The financing of the work of international affairs will be undertaken in the normal way as part of the work of Unit III. The staff will therefore be responsible for working with the Executive Director and Finance Officer of the Unit

in preparing a budget for the activities of the Board, which will then be submitted as part of the Unit budget to the Finance and Central Committees.

8.2 The Board will receive reports on the budget and funding of the work and will provide oversight of the detailed planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic activities and projects relating to its work within the overall policies and budget of the Unit approved by the Central Committee.

8.3 The Board should assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of international affairs.

9. CONTACTS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

A. General principles of contact:

1. a) The Board may negotiate directly in its own name and in the name of the Council with the United Nations and other international bodies in conformity with the policies of the Council

b) In making representation to national governments or other national entities to advance a Christian view on any problem in accordance with its aims, the Board shall do so ordinarily in consultation with member churches, national councils and the Board members in the country or countries. However, in exceptional circumstances the Board may make such representations without such consultation and even when national or regional bodies do not concur.

2. In interpreting Council policies for representations to governmental agencies, the following procedures may be employed:

a) the Board, when meeting, may propose representations in keeping with Council policy;

b) the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, in their official capacities, may make such proposals, provided that it is also in agreement with the decisions of the Board and after consultation with the General Secretary of the Council and the Moderator of the Central Committee and with their concurrence;

c) a member of the Board may not act in the name of the Board unless specific authorisation has been given;

d) the Board may, in addition, prepare and recommend statements to the Council for its consideration and to any appropriate assemblies or conferences meeting under the auspices of the Council and to such bodies with which relationships have been agreed under the provisions of by-law 3.4.

B. Procedures for contact with the United Nations:

In accordance with the arrangements provided by the United Nations and its specialised agencies, the staff in consultation with the Unit Executive Director and the General Secretary of the Council are empowered to seek and maintain on behalf of the Council the following contacts:

1. Consultative status with the United Nations, its specialised agencies and other intergovernmental bodies;

2. Such contacts with other organs and specialised agencies may be necessary to accomplish the Board's aims and the programmes of the Unit;

3. The Board shall, with the approval of the General Secretary of the Council, be responsible for facilitating and arranging such direct contact with organs and specialised agencies of the United Nations as may be requested by other Units of the Council and by bodies with which special relations have been agreed under the provisions of by-law 3.4.

10. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

10.1 These by-laws may be amended by the Central Committee on the recommendation of, or in consultation with the Board and the Unit Commission.

10.2 Three months' notice shall be given to members of the Board in respect of any proposal to consider an amendment to the by-laws at a meeting of the Board or of the Commission.

E. ECUMENICAL CHURCH LOAN FUND (Unit IV)

Note: ECLOF is a separate legal entity administered by the Council (Unit IV). It is regulated by an Act of Incorporation (available separately). An agreement between ECLOF and the World Council of Churches - which is still in process of being finalised - will regulate the relationship between the ECLOF Board and Unit IV.

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At its meeting in Johannesburg in January 1994 the Central Committee resolved:

1. to receive the report of the By-Laws Committee, noting the matters raised; it approved the proposals contained in sections IV, V and VI of the appended draft of the "Constitution, Rules, Regulations and By-Laws of the Council", as amended, *except for the By-Laws for Faith and Order contained in section VI.A, for which final approval will be sought at the Central Committee meeting in 1995;*

2. to ask the Executive Committee to review the Working Guide to the Rules of Debate in the Central Committee and authorised it to recommend such revision as it considers appropriate;

3. to note the concerns expressed in section 4 of the Report of the By-Laws Committee, and referred them to the Executive Committee for consideration and, where appropriate, for action.

The above version of the By-Laws was amended and approved by the WCC Central Committee as indicated in resolution 1 above.

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST *

Report of the Moderator (5.9)

Report of the General Secretary (5.10)

Activities Report of Unit I: Unity and Renewal (1.1)

Towards a new Definition of the Profile of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement - paper by Dr K. Raiser (1.2)

Letter to All God's People (World Laity Convention) (1.3)

Reports on Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order

Process on Viability of Ministerial Formation in today's world (A.2)

Theological and Ministerial Formation Programmes/Orthodox Churches (A.3)

Extract from Report of the Bossey Review Group (1.8.1)

Activities Report of Unit II: Churches in Mission: Health, Education, Witness (2.1)

International Conference - Participatory Action Research on AIDS and the Community as a Source of Care and Healing (September 1993) (2.2)

Estimated Distribution of Cumulative Adult HIV Infections (2.3)

Activities Report of Unit III: Justice, Peace and Creation (3.1)

"Giving the Decade Back to the Churches" (3.4)

Activities Report of Unit IV: Sharing and Service (4.1)

General Secretariat: Offices on Relations and Communication, Management and Finance (5.1); Programme report (5.3);

Biblical and Theological dimensions of Jubilee (5.5)

WCC Eighth Assembly (5.6)

Reports of the By-laws Committee (6.2; 6.4);

Report of the Third International Consultation of National Councils of Churches, Hong Kong, February 1993 (6.3)

Report of the Finance Committee (7.1)

Office for Income Coordination and Development report (7.1.4)

Financial Report of the World Council of Churches 1993

Selected policies and actions of the WCC concerning South Africa (8.1)

Statements and Messages by the General Secretary, September 1992 - December 1993 (8.3)

** Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of the CC document; all are available in English; some also in French, German and Spanish.*

